LIBRARIANS

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNTY LIBRARIAN

Salary: £16,392—£17,418
(national pay award pending)

The County Librarian of North Yorkshire will retire in December, 1982. This offers a unique opportunity for a well-qualified Chartered Librarian who has considerable experience of public library management at senior level to take up a major appointment in one of England's most beautiful counties.

The person appointed will have responsibility to the County Council for all library services supplied to a population of approximately 867,000 spread over an area of more than 2 million acres, through 61 libraries, 21 mobile libraries, 548 schools and multiple other outlets in hospitals, prisons and residential homes.

As well as motivating and controlling the Library Service, the County Librarian will be expected to make a contribution to the corporate management of the County Council.

This challenging and demanding position is based at Northallerton.

Further details and an application form, which must be returned no later than 8th October, 1982, are available from the Chief Executive and Clerk of the County Council, County Hall, Northallerton, North Yorkshire, DL7 8AD.
(Telephone Northallerton 3123, ext. 636).

Royal County of BERKSHIRE

ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

£5,781 – £6,588

Based at Langley Library in the North-East Division of the County.

Further details and application forms from Divisional Librarian, N.E. Berks, Central Library, High Street, Slough SL1 1EA. Tel: Slough 35166. Closing date October 1, 1982.

Berkshire County Council is an equal opportunity employer and all applicants will be considered solely on the basis of suitability for the post irrespective of race, colour, sex, marital status or disability.

THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

Classified Advertisement Rates
Display on Classified Pages

Single column centimetre £7.60
Minimum space: 9 cm × s.c. £68.40
Copy date

7 days preceding publication

Linage
All classifications £1.50 per line.
Minimum lines £4.50

Copy date

5 days preceding publication. Box number facilities £2.00.

Librarians
in Government Departments

There are vacancies in the following Government Departments for candidates with professional qualifications and at least one full year's post-qualification experience *or* one full year's practical work as part of an approved 4-year sandwich course. Those expecting to fulfil these requirements shortly, may normally also be considered.

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
Vacancies in Aldershot, Woolwich and Central London, but **successful candidates must be prepared to serve anywhere in the UK.**

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD
Branch Library, Tolworth, Surbiton, Surrey.
Part-time post: 22½ hours per week.

DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT
Employment Appeals Tribunal Library, St James Square, London SW1.

Further vacancies may arise in these and other Departments.

Salary: £5,520–£7,700; pro rata for part-time post (London up to £1,087 higher).
Starting salary may be above the minimum. Promotion prospects.

For further details and an application form (to be returned by 6 October 1982) write to Civil Service Commission, Alencon Link, Basingstoke, Hants, RG21 1JB, or telephone Basingstoke (0256) 68551 (answering service operates outside office hours). Please quote ref: G(3)624.

THE PRINCESS ALEXANDRA SCHOOL OF NURSING
THE LONDON HOSPITAL, WHITECHAPEL, LONDON E1

LIBRARY ASSISTANT

The main library in this large and busy School of Nursing caters for over 1000 nurse learners undertaking courses leading to enrolment, registration and post graduate qualifications. The Library Assistant will assist the qualified Librarian in post, with the day to day organisation and management of the service. Applicants should preferably have some secretarial and library experience.

Salary: Higher Clerical Officer: £4,230–£5,118 p.a. plus London Weighting, £393 p.a.

For further information please contact: Miss C. M. Gilling, Assistant Director, Tel: 01-247 5454, extension School of Nursing.

For application forms please apply to The Personnel Office, The London Hospital, Whitechapel, London E1 1BB. Tel. 01-247 5454; ext. 36.

LONDON
LIBRARY ASSISTANT

The Institute's Library requires an assistant with library experience to join a friendly and lively group of people based in Kingsway.

The position involves working on the book lending counter, dealing with telephone, letters, and personal requests for books from members, plus other general library duties. This is an interesting library handling enquiries and problems from managers in industry and public services.

If you are looking for a more demanding job, why not join us?

Salary £3,564 – £4,182 plus £1,200 L.A. Scale plus L.V.S. per day and four weeks holiday. Applications should be made to Personnel Manager, British Institute of Management, Management House, Cottingham Road, Corby, Northants NN17 1TT. Tel. Corby (0536) 461 L163

NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE POLYTECHNIC
COLLEGE ROAD, STOKE-ON-TRENT, ST4 2DE

ASSISTANT TUTOR-LIBRARIAN (ART)

Applications for this post are invited from Graduate Chartered Librarians with previous experience in an Art Library. Salary: Lecturer Grade II scale – £6,855 – £11,022 per annum, and the starting point will be determined by the candidate's qualifications and experience.

All applicants are asked to note that it is the County Council's view that it desirable for their employees to be members of an appropriate trade union. Application forms and further particulars may be obtained from the Personnel Officer, North Staffordshire Polytechnic, College Road, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 2DE, tel. (0782) 44341, extension 287.
Closing Date: 27.9.1982. L165

LONDON
LIBRARIANS

Applications are invited from Chartered Librarians for the following posts:

1. LIBRARIAN III (Salary Scale £6,168 – £7,017 plus £1,524 London Weighting Allowance) Salary pro-rata for part-time posts.
2. Sir Williams Collins Secondary School, Reed Rd. G. Stewart at Sir William Collins Secondary School, Charlington Rd., NW7 1RG.
3. Library Support Team of Librarians, based at the Centre for Learning Resources, 370 Kennington Lane, SE11. A peripatetic librarian is required to assist in a pilot scheme for the development of library resources in the primary school section.
4. Sacred Heart High School, Acting Head Mistress: Sister M. Rumbelt. Sacred Heart High School, 9115 Hammersmith Road, W14 0DQ. This is a part-time post, 18½ hours a week, term time only.
5. Vauxhall Manor School, Acting Head Miss Evans; at Vauxhall Manor School, Lawn Lane, Lambeth Road, SE11 6HT. This is a part-time post, 18½ hours per week, for one year only.
6. St. Mildred's Roman Catholic School, Head Mistress Miss M. Hughes. St. Mildred's Roman Catholic Secondary School, Tormentor Hill, Bermondsey, SE16 3UN. This is a part-time post, 18½ hours a week, term time only.

The ILEA is an Equal Opportunities Employer. Application forms and further details from the Staffing Section, ILEA, 10 Cambridge Terrace, Regent's Park, London, NW1 4JL. Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope for reply.

Completed application forms to be returned by Friday 24th September 1982. L154

LITERARY

LITERARY AGENCY ANGLO-AMERICAN WANTED. Interested applicants should send CV and specimen of work to Box No. 0000 [illegible]

BOOKS & PRINTS

Phillips
FINE ART AUCTIONEERS & VALUERS SINCE 1796

PRINTED BOOKS, ATLASES & MAPS, MANUSCRIPTS
Thursday 7th October 1982 at 1.30 pm

Autograph letters signed by Percy Bysshe Shelley (three from Pisa, 1820); Edward Trelawny and Captain Daniel Roberts (about the cremation of the bodies of Shelley and Williams, 1822); Mrs Elizabeth Montagu, Charles Dickens, William Wilberforce (series). John Ruskin (fine series from Venice), Horatio Nelson, Marshal Jean Lannes; Collection of letters signed by Napoleon (including one from the Holy Land, 1799);

Documents signed by Charles I, Charles II and Cromwell.

Autograph letter signed by Mary Johnson, wife of Rev. Richard Johnson, Chaplain of the First Fleet, Port Jackson, 1793.

Corrected galley proofs of Sir Winston Churchill's history of the Second World War, etc.

Viewing: Tuesday, 5th October, 9.00 a.m. - 4.30 p.m.
Wednesday, 6th October, 9.00 a.m. - 4.30 p.m.
Morning of the Sale, 9.00 a.m. - 12 noon

Illustrated Catalogue £2.50 including postage

Forthcoming Sales: 28th October, 18th November, 9th December.
Enquiries: James Smith Ext. 351 or 357 or 01-409 3193

7 Blenheim Street, New Bond Street, London W1Y 0AS Tel: 01-629 6602

LONDON · NEW YORK · TORONTO · GENEVA · OTTAWA · BOSTON
Members of the Society of Fine Art Auctioneers

AMERICAN OUT-OF-PRINT readables and collectibles. Free Search Service. Prices quoted in sterling to include surface shipment. Sterling cheques accepted and preferred. Brannen Books, Box 84109 Salt Lake City, Utah 84109 USA. L114

TWO SHORT LISTS. 1: 17th/18th century pamphlets 2: English social history, costumes etc. Arthur Pepe, Bookshop, 38 Museum Street, London, W.C.1 L114

MODERN FIRST EDITIONS. Catalogue 7 now available. Send SAE D. B. Moyse, 31 Tynley Rd., London NW10 9JR. Tel: 01-961 4905. L114

BIOGRAPHY O/P free search. Biography Bookroom, 45 Station Rd., Swanley, Kent. Tel: 02 65858.

MIDDLE EAST. Catalogue issued. – A. C. Hall, 30 Grainger Road, Twickenham, Middx.

PUBLIC & UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDIES IN THE HUMANITIES

Visiting Research Fellowships

Fellowships (Honorary or with small Stipend) will be offered in 1983–84, for short-term periods of 1 to 3 months, and in addition applications will be considered for Fellowships of up to 12 months, for advanced research in subjects within the field of the Humanities. Applications are invited from scholars of established reputation, and also from younger scholars holding a doctorate or offering equivalent evidence of aptitude for advanced study. A candidate for a doctorate should not apply unless the degree will have been obtained before the election of Fellows in February 1983.

The last day for receipt of applications and all references is 28 January, 1983.

Application forms and fuller information may be obtained from the Director of the Institute, 17 Buccleuch Place, Edinburgh EH8 9LN, Telephone 031-667 1011 extension 6349.

BUSINESS SERVICES

MANUSCRIPTS edited and improved, catalogues and lists arranged and prepared, by experienced copy-editor. Full/part-time assistance available. Specialist Associates, 19 Stanhope Gdns, London SW7. L162

M/S TYPING electronic typewriter, justified margins, reliable service. 01-794 1851. L152

FREELANCE typing available at reasonable rates. Crouch End area. Tel: 01-455 9011/6043. L162

© TIMES NEWSPAPERS LIMITED 1982

Published by Times Newspapers Limited, Nos. 1 and 2 Virginia Street, London, E1 9BD. Printed and published by Northumberland Press Ltd., Gateshead, Tyne and Wear. Registered at the Post Office as a newspaper. ISSN 0307-661X

FELLOWSHIPS

WINCHESTER SCHOOL OF ART
Hampshire County Council

ARTS COUNCIL WRITER'S FELLOWSHIP

Applications are invited from potential writers for the above post in connexion on 1st January 1983, for one year in the first instance.

The purpose of the Fellowship at Winchester is to provide 1 year of distinction with the time and a sympathetic environment in which to develop his/her work; to counsel students with the art of writing, and to extend their appreciation and enjoyment of literature.

The value of the Fellowship is £7,000. Further details and an application form are available from the Registrar, Winchester School of Art, 21 Avenue, Winchester, Hants. SO23 8DL. Closing date 4th October 1982.

PERSONAL

AUTHORS WANTED by NEW PUBLISHERS
If you have written a book of any description that you would like to have published, please send for details to:
The Book Guild Ltd, (Dept LH)
221 High St, Lewes, Sussex.

IMMEDIATE ADVANCES £100 to £5000. Written terms on request. **REGIONAL TRUST LTD.** 81 Dover St, Mayfair, London W1X 3RA. [illegible]

RESEARCH Assistance, investigation, collation, proof reading services and typing. Qualified graduate, specialising in Literature and Languages. Reasonable rates. Tel: 01-947 3929.

LONDON BASED researcher, history and antiques. Contact Dr. Sheila PAIN, 1 Cleve Road, London NW6.

All advertisements are subject to the conditions of acceptance of Times Newspapers Ltd, copies of which are available on request.

TLS

THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

FRIDAY • 24 SEPTEMBER 1982 • No 4,147 • 50p

Theodore Dreiser: of sex and streetcars

Clement Attlee, the unknown Prime Minister



January 10, 1947: Clement Attlee and his wife photographed on the occasion of their silver wedding. The antique silver tea caddy in Mrs Attlee's right hand is a present from the staff at 10 Downing Street. The Prime Minister and his wife, The Times reported, had found it on the dining room table when they came down to breakfast.

Michael Tanner on Donizetti's operas

C. M. Woodhouse: the disarmament debate

Patricia Highsmith on rats

M. F. Perutz: the genetics of evolution

Agatha Christie's life
C. S. Lewis's essays
Obsolescent laws
Tamil myths

Commentary: Mike Leigh; P. N. Furbank on Pirandello

Fiction: Fay Weldon, J. G. Ballard

METHUEN

Methuen & Co Ltd
11 New Fetter Lane
London EC4P 4EE

Methuen Inc
733 Third Avenue
New York NY 10017

Troilus and Cressida

Edited by KENNETH PALMER

The Arden Shakespeare

This edition of *Troilus and Cressida* is based primarily on the Quarto of 1609, and adopts the minimum of readings from the First Folio (1623), and few from subsequent editions. The commentary is full. The introduction proposes that Troilus should be studied not as a problem play but as something *sui generis* – an argumentative but detached examination of topics which had already engaged Shakespeare's attention.

354 pages
Hardback 0 416 47680 5 £12.50
Paperback 0 416 17790 5 £3.25

Roland Barthes

Structuralism and after

ANNETTE LAVERS

In this study, the first to deal with the whole of Barthes's work, Annette Lavers takes as her guiding principle his dual aspiration to scientific discovery and to an increasingly sophisticated theory and practice of the text. She relates the many themes and aspects of Barthes's work to similar research in literary theory, and to the vital intellectual developments of the last four decades, from the existentialism and Marxism of the post-war years to structuralism and its recent contestation.

314 pages
Hardback 0 416 72380 2 £14.95
Ex USA

Marx and Justice

The radical critique of liberalism

ALLEN E. BUCHANAN

This provides a comprehensive examination of Marx's thought on justice. The author argues that principles of justice are seen by Marx as expressions of contradiction and alienation in society and that it is a central aspect of the superiority of communist society over class-based social orders that questions of justice are redundant. The book also contains an extended assessment of the mutual relations of Marxian thought with John Rawls theory of justice.

224 pages
Hardback 0 416 33450 4 £12.95
Ex USA

The Origins of Greek Thought

JEAN-PIERRE VERNANT

Although the influence of ancient Greece on Western culture is generally taken for granted, the dynamics of Greek intellectual life have remained obscure. Jean-Pierre Vernant's concise, brilliant essay on the origins of Greek thought relates the cultural achievement of the ancient Greeks to their physical and social environment, and shows that what they believed was inseparable from the way they lived.

144 pages
Hardback 0 416 34310 4 £9.95
Ex USA

An Economic History of the Middle East and North Africa

CHARLES ISSAWI

In this study Professor Issawi examines and explains the development of these economies since 1800, focusing particularly on the challenge posed by the rise and subsequent decline of Western economic and political domination and the Middle Eastern response to it. He discusses the crucial effects of the growth of oil and oil-related industries, and finally assesses the likely gains and losses in this long period for both the countries in the area and the Western powers, in the form of a hypothetical balance sheet.

318 pages
Hardback 0 416 34330 9 £12.50
Ex USA

Music and its Instruments

ROBERT DONINGTON

Robert Donington has presented a book that approaches music itself by way of the instruments that are its working tools. He not only discusses the different sounds these instruments make but also how they make them, and how and why such sounds may be affecting us as they do in music. The volume is fully illustrated with photographs and with pictures of early instruments.

240 pages
Hardback 0 416 72270 9 £13.00
Paperback 0 416 72280 6 £5.95

All prices are net in the UK only

THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT
Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX
SEPTEMBER 24 1982

Archaeology 1039
Biography and Letters 1033
Biology 1027–28
Commentary 1034–35
Fiction 1031–32
History 1040, 1043
Law 1029
Literature 1023–24, 1046
Opera 1038
Poetry 1041
Politics 1026, 1030
Popular Arts 1047
Religion 1045
Russian Literature 1044
Social Anthropology 1042

INDEX OF BOOKS REVIEWED

ADAMS, DOUGLAS *Life, the Universe and Everything* [Richard Brown] 1023
ANGLESEY, THE MARQUESS OF *A History of the British Cavalry 1816–1919: Volume 3, 1872–1898* [Brian Bond] 1045
ANDERSON, JUDITH ICKE *William Howard Taft: An Intimate History* [J. A. Thompson] 1026
ASHBROOK, WILLIAM *Donizetti and his Operas* [Michael Tanner] 1038
BALLARD, J. G. *Myths of the Near Future* [Thomas Sutcliffe] 1031
BENATAR, STEPHEN *Wish Her Safe at Home* [S. J. Newman] 1031
BERRY, JAMES *Cut-Way Feelins, Lovlng, and Lucy's Letters* [Tim Dooley] 1031
BLACKABY, FRANK (Editor) *World Armaments and Disarmament. The Arms Race and Arms Control* [C. M. Woodhouse] 1028
CALABRESI, GUIDO *A Common Law for the Age of Statutes* [J. R. Pole] 1029
CHRISTIE, IAN R. *Wars and Revolutions: Britain 1760–1815* [John Cannon] 1040
CLARK, MICHAEL, and MOWLAM, MARJORIE (Editors) *Debate on Disarmament* [C. M. Woodhouse] 1028
DESOWITZ, ROBERT S. *New Guinea Tapeworms and Jewish Grandmothers* [J. F. Watkins] 1027
DUNN, LEWIS A. *Controlling the Bomb* [C. M. Woodhouse] 1028
EVANS, DAVID *Big Road Blues: Tradition and Creativity in the Folk Blues* [Bill Luckin] 1047
FARSON, DANIEL *Henry: An Appreciation of Henry Williamson* [Julian Symons] 1023
GALENSON, DAVID W. *White Servitude in Colonial America: An economic analysis* [Esmond Wright] 1040
GOLDBLAT, JOZEF *Agreements for Arms Control: A Critical Survey* [C. M. Woodhouse] 1028
GEGGUS, DAVID *Slavery, War, and Revolution: The British Occupation of Saint Domingue 1793–1798* [Piers Mackesy] 1040
HARRIS, KENNETH *Attlee* [Kenneth O. Morgan] 1026
HART, MARTIN *Rats* [Patricia Highsmith] 1032
HART-DAVIS, RUPERT (Editor) *The Lyttelton Hart-Davis Letters: Volume IV, 1959* [Alan Bell] 1033
HOBSON, DOROTHY *Crossroads: The Drama of a Soap Opera* [Craig Brown] 1047
JACOB, FRANÇOIS *The Possible and the Actual* [M. F. Perutz] 1028
KALDOR, MARY, and SMITH, DAN (Editors) *Disarming Europe* [C. M. Woodhouse] 1028
LE QUESNE, A. L. *Carlyle* [Rosemary Ashton] 1046
LEWIS, C. S. *Of This and Other Worlds* [George Watson] 1024
MAGEE, WES *A Dark Age* [Grevel Lindop] 1044
MARKHAM, E. A. *Love, Politics & Food* [Tim Dooley] 1043
MILES, PATRICK, and PITCHER, HARVEY (Editors and Translators) *Anton Chekhov: The Early Stories 1883–88* [Kyril FitzLyon] 1044
MORRIS, JOHN *Londinium: London in the Roman Empire* [Barry Cunliffe] 1039
MOSLEY, PHILIP *Ingmar Bergman: The Cinema as Mistress* [Nick Roddick] 1047
NELSON, THOMAS ALLEN *Kubrick: Inside a Film Artist's Maze* [Nick Roddick] 1047
OGDEN, SCHUBERT M. *The Point of Christology* [J. L. Houlden] 1035
OPPERBY, PREBEN *Leopold Stokowski* [Patrick O'Connor] 1038
OSBORNE, CHARLES *The Life and Crimes of Agatha Christie* [T. J. Binyon] 1033
PIRIE, DAVID B. *William Wordsworth: The Poetry of Grandeur and of Tenderness* [Cedric Watts] 1046
PODHORETZ, NORMAN *Why We Were in Vietnam* [Michael Howard] 1030
RIGGIO, THOMAS P. (Editor) *Theodore Dreiser: American Diaries 1902–1926* [Pearl K. Bell] 1023
SHULMAN, DAVID DEAN *Tamil Temple Myths* [Edmund Leach] 1042
STOCK, R. D. *The Holy and the Daemonic from Sir Thomas Browne to William Blake* [Robin Robbins] 1046
STRIKER, CECIL L. *The Myrelaion (Bodrum Camii) in Istanbul* [Cyril Mango] 1029
STRUVE, NIKITA *Ossip Mandelstam* [Henry Gifford] 1044
SWEENEY, MATTHEW *A Dream of Maps* [Tim Dooley] 1041
THOMPSON, E. P., and others *Exterminism and Cold War* [C. M. Woodhouse] 1028
THOMPSON, E. P. *Zero Option* [C. M. Woodhouse] 1028
TRAUTMANN, THOMAS R. *Dravidian Kinship* [C. J. Fuller] 1042
VAN DER VAT, DAN *The Grand Scuttle: The sinking of the German Fleet at Scapa Flow in 1919* [Bryan Ranft] 1043
VERNON, FRANCES *Privileged Children* [Jennifer Uglow] 1033
WALCOTT, DEREK *The Fortunate Traveller* [Roger Garfitt] 1041
WATSON, WILLIAM *The Knight on the Bridge* [Alan Brownjohn] 1032
WILSON, BRYAN *Religion in Sociological Perspective* [Robert Towler] 1045
WILSON, FAY *The President's Child* [Patricia Craig] 1031

COMMENTARY

Conference *International Shakespeare Conference* (Stratford-upon-Avon) [S. Schoenbaum] 1034
Television *Mike Leigh Season* (BBC-TV) [Andrew Hislop] 1034
Theatre *Caryl Churchill: Top Girls* (Royal Court Theatre) [Carol Rumens] 1035
Luigi Pirandello: The Rules of the Game (Theatre Royal, Haymarket) [P. N. Furbank] 1035
Author, Author 1036
Fifty years on 1036
Poems by John Bayley, Andrew Motion 1044, 1045
Letters on The OED Supplement, Public Lending Right, Copyright, 'Edmund Ironside', Milton in Russia 1036, 1037
Among this week's contributors 1048
Information, please 1048

Of sex and streetcars

Pearl K. Bell

THOMAS P. RIGGIO (Editor)
Theodore Dreiser: American Diaries 1902–1926
471pp. University of Pennsylvania Press. £21.40.
0812278097

Theodore Dreiser began keeping a diary in the autumn of 1902, when he was thirty-one years old and had sunk to one of the lowest points in a long and tumultuous life. His first book, the novel *Sister Carrie*, had been brought out two years earlier by a reluctant publisher who had insisted on Pecksniffian alterations in the hope of making the harsh saga acceptable to the genteel taste of the time. Yet it had received mainly bad reviews, and sold scarcely at all. Dreiser's royalties, for the first year of *Sister Carrie*'s life in the world, came to $68.40. After months of restless wandering through the South and Midwest, struggling with anguished futility to get on with his second novel, *Jennie Gerhardt*, Dreiser came to uneasy rest in Philadelphia, in a state of nervous and physical collapse. The doctor he consulted prescribed some medicines and thought it might help if his patient kept a diary: how he slept, what he ate, the pills and tonics he took and how he responded to them, what he was reading, where he walked. For the time, it was an extraordinary kind of therapy.

Given Dreiser's instinctive reverence for the power of facts, for the meticulously observed minutiae of daily existence which he wove into his novels, it is not surprising that he attached the doctor's prescriptions to his diary, and invariably recorded the cost of filling them. Very rarely, however, did he allow himself to venture beyond the scrupulous itemizing of symptoms, pills, food, and the like, to rail against his lonely and poverty-stricken state, as he did one grim winter day when he had to walk five miles for lack of a car fare: "Profess as I may and draw myself up to the full stature of my courage, there is nothing but sorrow for me in thinking of what I might have. The beauty, the comfort, the affection of the world . . . Me. Theodore Dreiser. A man who has ideas enough to write and to spare and walking for want of a nickel." Soon after this entry in 1903, he broke off the diary he had kept for less than a year, and fled to Brooklyn. He would return to the task of a daily record only sporadically in the next two decades.

In 1917, with four more novels now behind him, Dreiser settled in the literary mecca of Greenwich Village and once again took up the ritual of day-to-day notes. Though he was by now in nothing like such desperate straits, and could take comfort in his growing reputation, Dreiser was still far from confident of his ability to live by his writing, as the obsessive attention to money in the diary makes clear. But the Village world did not hold him long – he was always too much of a loner – and by 1919 he had moved to Hollywood with Helen Richardson, the would-be film actress who eventually became his second wife. The California diary, covering the period from 1919 to 1926, is the lengthiest and potentially the most interesting of those in the present volume, for it was then that he wrote the novel, *An American Tragedy*, whose enormous success drastically changed his life.

What is immediately startling about Dreiser's intermittent record of his daily doings is its unliterary bareness; the hand of the writer is scarcely detectable in these telegraphic jottings, and it is clear throughout that at no point did Dreiser conceive this record as a literary journal which might eventually take its place among his published works. It would be hard to think of another novelist of genius who in his daily summing-up remained so stubbornly indifferent to literary reflection or analysis, to philosophical meditation, gossip, self-scrutiny, to capturing the easily forgotten transient ideas for novels or stories that occur to a writer at unexpected moments. Dreiser's notes about the work in hand are limited entirely to subject and title, acceptance or rejection, and how much he was paid. He is far more forthcoming about the weather, and where he took his meals and especially how much they cost, and he is particularly informative about the staggering succession of women who shared his bed (and sometimes the floor) morning, noon and night. Given the far from permissive sexual mores of the time, it may at first seem curious that he was able to put his hands on so many compliant, uninhibited females, but they were in the main women who lived on the fringes of bohemia or longed to become part of that emancipated world.

If we are given no idea of the trouble he might be having with a particular literary project, we none the less get a vivid sense of the way Dreiser exploited the editorial talents of his lovers, most of them far better educated than he, as ruthlessly as he did their sexual ardour. An autodidact whose grammar was shaky and whose spelling remained capricious throughout his life, Dreiser made no secret of his dependence on *all* the talents of his innumerable women. As the editor of these diaries, Thomas Riggio, dryly remarks in his introduction, "To every bedroom he carried along a manuscript as well as a change of clothes." The journalist Hutchins Hapgood, with whom Dreiser had a rather edgy friendship during his Greenwich Village days, claimed in his memoirs that "Everything was subordinated in Dreiser's life to his work . . . He rarely talked about anything except literature. . . . The only other absorbing interest he had was sex; and that took decidedly a second place . . . Neither in his talks to me nor in his early autobiographical works did I ever discover any hint of the higher and more intense sex-imagination."

From his diaries one would find it impossible to infer *what* Dreiser actually had to say about literature; and there is a glaring lack of any sort of imagination, higher or lower, in Dreiser's clipped, unadorned record of his restless sexual "varietism", as he called it. Though Mr Riggio claims that the Village diary "underscores the links between Dreiser's work and his sexual encounters, and therefore is important for an understanding of his entire career", this would seem to be taking the scholar's wish for the writer's deed. Dreiser the writer is nowhere to be seen or felt in a typical entry, for June 6, 1917:

> Bert and I eat at French place ["Bert" was his nickname for Estelle Kubitz, his secretary and principal mistress that year]. She is in good humour . . . I buy her a peony. Dictionary of sex terms arrives. Louise calls up. Is going to New Rochelle today to play tennis. Will come down tomorrow. I post these notes. Lill calls up. Wants to come down. Does so in half hour. Is very gay . . . I let her look at new dictionary of venery which just came. She gets excited. Wants to copulate. We do, in back room. Lill leaves. I go to bank. 2:45. Return. Get bottle of milk and box of Sanatogen. Make myself drink . . . . I go out, get a steak (2 lbs., 70¢), 2 boxes strawberries (25¢), one bottle milk (quart, 11¢) . . . We eat, read papers, talk of war.

He does not tell us what they said about the war – there is almost nothing in the diaries about the world outside Dreiser's daily rounds, "round" being one of his favorite euphemisms for sexual intercourse – though we know from other sources that Dreiser was fiercely pro-German and anti-English. What we *are* informed about, at repetitious length, is which streetcars he took, where he got off, when the cleaning woman arrived, what a fortune-teller read in his tea leaves, how the price of toilet paper has risen. Though Dreiser knew many of the writers, journalists, and radicals who made New York an exciting place to be in in those years, he almost never remarks anything more revealing than their names. At one point we are told that Abraham Cahan, the editor of the *Jewish Daily Forward*, came to see Dreiser, who did not love the Jews, but all the novelist has to say about the visit is "We discuss Russia, the Bolsheviki, Dostoevsky, and the East Side."

If Dreiser had no interest in using his diary as a notebook of ideas and possibilities, literary and otherwise, what purpose did this severely factual accumulation of daily trivia fulfil? One is tempted to regard the sexual detail as a sign of delayed adolescence, a gee-whiz middle-aged way of assuring himself about his undiminished prowess as a lover. But that doesn't account for everything in the diaries, and the answer is more likely to be found in Dreiser's incurably superstitious nature. Especially in the down-and-out years in Philadelphia, Dreiser took wary note of horseshoes, hutchbacks, cripples, and other omens of good or bad luck. Believing as he did in a heartless mechanistic universe, the daily doings may have served for Dreiser, however unconsciously, as a way of propitiating a malevolent fate. To write something down is to bring it, in some way, under control. When he noted the imminent break-up of his affair with Estelle Kubitz, Dreiser for once allowed himself a looser rein: "What can you do in this world, which is so unbalanced, all running after the few successful, all ignoring the hopelessly poor or unsuccessful or defective. Life is made for the strong. There is no mercy in it for the weak – none." But such ruminations are all too rare.

One has to remember that it was a long time before Theodore Dreiser was finally granted the financial success he craved – and deserved. Through all the years in which he devoted spare moments to "posting" the notes in his diary, he was plagued by money worries. (When he held a phenomenally well-paid job as editor of a women's magazine, in the first decade of the century, he kept no diary.) As late as 1922, when Dreiser was fifty-one, his recurrent attacks of despondency would occasionally allow the writer to push aside the accountant of sex and streetcars, and confess in the diary that "At the moment I see no very clear way out of money troubles or that I am making any real artistic headway with work. The relentless push against the individual on and away into dissolution hangs heavy on me." It was only with the publication of *An American Tragedy*, in 1925, that Dreiser, after half a century of nightmares about poverty and failure, finally became rich as well as famous. There was no longer any need to disarm a hostile universe with his ritualistic jottings, and that was the end of Dreiser the diarist.

There was always a strong element of the primitive in Dreiser, as man and writer. He was, as F. O. Matthiessen pointed out in his critical study, the first American writer whose family name was not English or Scotch-Irish. The American child of an impoverished German immigrant father, he knew nothing of genteel literary manners and remained isolated from the prevailing tradition. As an ill-educated outsider, he did not have to pay his dues to a world that autonomatically excluded him, and this as much as his driving ambition gave him the raw strength to trust his own feelings and use his uncluttered gift of observation. It hardly needs saying by now that this rendered him inimical to the smug middle-class values that had American culture by the throat when he began to write *Sister Carrie*. As his friend, the scientist Elmer Gates, wrote to Dreiser early in his career, "You have the genius to describe *what takes place*, and not merely what you *think ought to take place*." But of course he knew this perfectly well.

One cannot help wondering why,

Across the Abyss
PAUL ROUBICZEK
Translated by GEORGE BIRD
Paul Roubiczek was a Jew, born in Prague and educated in Berlin. Forced to emigrate in 1933, he eventually settled in Cambridge, where he became a Christian and a successful teacher and writer. This book is a translation of the diary he wrote in German during 1939–40: a dramatic account of the impact of war and a moving spiritual document. £15.00 net

Christian Antioch
A Study of Early Christian Thought in the East
D. S. WALLACE-HADRILL
Drawing on Greek and Syriac sources, Dr Wallace-Hadrill traces the religious background of Antioch from the second to the eighth centuries AD. He provides a detailed examination of the exegesis of scripture, the interpretation of history, philosophy, and the doctrine of the nature of God as applied to an understanding of Christ and man's salvation. £17.50 net

Community, Anarchy and Liberty
MICHAEL TAYLOR
The author examines the methods actually used to maintain social order in anarchic and quasi-anarchic societies and shows how they can be effective only in a small and stable community. He also argues that gross inequality can be prevented in an anarchic community, and defends community from the charge of incompatibility with individual liberty. Hard covers £14.00 net
Paperback £4.95 net

New in paperback
The Child and the Book
A Psychological and Literary Exploration
NICHOLAS TUCKER
Examines the relationship between children and fiction, from infancy to adolescence, explaining why certain types of story have always been popular, and why some children are keener readers than others.
'A rewarding, maddening, fascinating, and utterly undoseable book.' *The Times Educational Supplement*
Paperback £5.95 net

The Republic in the Village
The People of the Var from the French Revolution to the Second Republic
MAURICE AGULHON
Translated by JANET LLOYD
An analysis of the social background to the 1848 revolution and the Second Republic in the department of the Var which explores broader issues of the development of culture in rural communities, and the relation of politics and culture to social divisions and economic developments. £27.50 net
Co-Publication with the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, Paris.

Variation in an English Dialect
A Sociolinguistic Study
JENNY CHESHIRE
This volume presents the first systematic account of the morphological and syntactic differences between standard English and a non-standard (working class) variety of English. The author's original data come from recordings of everyday conversations, providing the basis for a perceptive analysis of variation in contemporary English and of the nature and function of variation in general. £18.00 net
Cambridge Studies in Linguistics 37

New in paperback
The Promise of Happiness
Value and Meaning in Children's Fiction
FRED INGLIS
This book is written in answer to the question 'which books should our children read, and why?'
'. . . comes not so much as a breath of fresh air but as a force nine gale, and while some cherished objectives may get blown over in the process, the end result is generally invigorating, and certainly worth attending to.' *New Society*
Paperback £5.95 net

Population and Marketing Settlements in Ch'ing China
GILBERT ROZMAN
The author presents and evaluates statistical data from North China which provides information on two major factors affecting China's modern development: the massive population growth prior to 1850 and the tenacity of small-state markets as the locus of commercialisation. £18.50 net

Matter and Sense
A Critique of Contemporary Realism
HOWARD ROBINSON
This book presents a very forceful critique of the modern forms that materialism has taken, showing that they all overlook or quite inadequately explain elementary and unimpeachable intuitions about our own mental experiences. £13.50 net
Cambridge Studies in Philosophy

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

unlike the incidents and comments many novelists scrawled in their diaries and mined as the raw material of their fiction. Dreiser's indefatigable sexual busyness did not find its way into his novels. He did portray some of his mistresses in the thinly disguised sketches collected as *A Gallery of Women*, but this is not major work. (Robert Penn Warren has described the book as "a sort of trophy room in print".) A novel that dealt with all that coupling would need a touch of comedy to be bearable, and in this Dreiser was notoriously lacking. Nor was he a novelist of "manners" who could weave his own exploits into a candid chronicle of his immediate time and place.

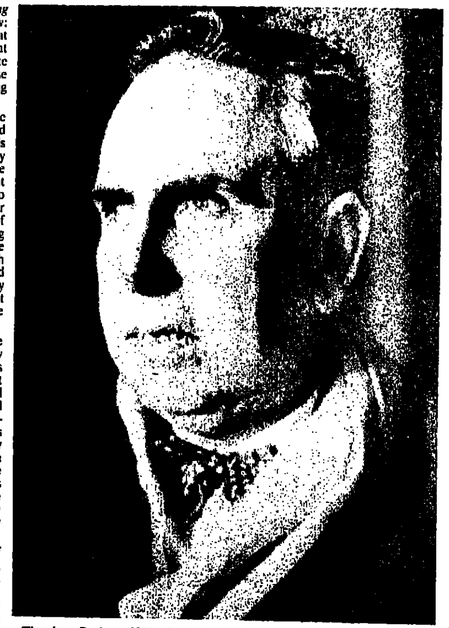
In his best work he drew upon sombre memories of his family – the fanatically religious father, the disgraced sisters who ran off with married men – and used his extraordinary powers of observation to dramatize the consequences of ambition and longing in America: brutality and corruption in the case of the financier Frank Cowperwood, murder in the case of Clyde Griffiths. For Dreiser, his diary had a psychological, not a literary, function. Though he could be sentimental and pretentious, though his prose was often clumsy and ponderous – how tirelessly the critics have hurled their *f'accuse* as though he were being tried in a Supreme Court of Style – his inelegant sentences proved mysteriously well suited to his great purpose of articulating the inarticulate without falsifying it. As Saul Bellow pointed out years ago, with characteristic shrewdness, "I often think the criticisms of Dreiser as a stylist at times betray a resistance to the feelings he causes readers to suffer. If they can say that he can't write, they need not experience these feelings."

Facts were essential to his brooding contemplation, his way of doing justice to the solidity and squalor of the ordinary, of giving fullness and the weight of truth to "the feelings he causes readers to suffer". And sometimes facts, in the novels as in his diaries, were also a means of fending off the terror stalking a lonely human life, lying just out of sight beyond the visible world that masked it. During the fatal train ride in *An American Tragedy* that carries Clyde and his pregnant sweetheart to Big Bittern Lake, the young man attempts to still his horror at the murder he plans to commit by taking careful, *counting* note of what he sees from the window: "Those five birds winging toward that patch of trees over there – below that hill . . . . Those nine black and white cows on the green hillside . . . . Those three automobiles out there running almost as fast as this train . . . ."

So, too, though the stakes and the effect were obviously not the same, did Theodore Dreiser stave off his incessant worries about money by writing down exactly what each orange had cost. And if one can assume that the promiscuity spelled out so laboriously in the diaries betrays a fear of impotence, what better way of neutralizing *that* anxiety than by noting who, and when, and what they were like as lovers, and just how long each "round" lasted before he lumbered back to his desk? Just as he habitually worked on several literary projects at once, Dreiser needed a harem. It drove them all crazy.

Reading the artless entries in the diaries, we get a renewed sense of how literal-minded a sensibility was Dreiser's, how much his incessant dabbling in philosophy and mechanistic biology and psychological theory – the grandeur of abstraction – went against the grain of his temperament and talents. Like many self-educated men, he longed to be a serious intellectual, but he had the least abstract mind imaginable, and his obsessive attempts to demonstrate what an erudite and original thinker he was, in politics as well as philosophy and science, led him badly astray.

It was the overwhelming actuality of individual lives, the pathos of destiny, that lay at the core of his greatness as a novelist, despite all his hackneyed apostrophes to "beauty" and "romance". As he wrote in *Dawn*, a memoir of his childhood and youth, what moved him most as a raw young man from Indiana gaping at the magnificence and sordidness of Chicago in the 1890s was "the art of the accidental experiences of individuals. . . ." The urban spectacle of Chicago and New York, as metropolitan America moved with ruinous confidence into the twentieth century, was transformed, in his work, into the wonder and agony of Hurstwood's life and death; it is Dreiser's *people* who move us still when the historical particularity recedes. In his great years, which unhappily came to an end with *An American Tragedy*, two decades before



Theodore Dreiser (1871–1945). A leading practitioner of Naturalism in American fiction, Dreiser, was the son of a poor German immigrant and was largely self-educated. The failure of his first novel Sister Carrie *led him to contemplate suicide; it was not until the appearance of* An American Tragedy *in 1925 (the year which also saw the publication of* The Great Gatsby*) that he was finally freed from money worries.*

he died, Dreiser looked out upon the enormous landscape of American reality not with the outrage of a social reformer or the cool detachment of an objective realist, but with the awe of a man totally absorbed in, yet deeply puzzled by the strangeness of the inexorable working out of character and fate.

In the 1930s and 1940s, having lost his creative power, he became a public figure and fell prey to Communist flattery (he joined the Party a few months before his death), seeming at best a credulous idealist and at worst a gullible fool who allowed his fame to be exploited by a political movement he badly misunderstood. But it isn't only his politics that can account for the decline of Dreiser's reputation in his later years and after his death. He became a victim of cultural fashion: when the literary taste-makers, moving into the 1950s, felt nothing but sophisticated disdain for his awkward prose, his naïve determinism, and his faith in the unalterable authenticity of feeling, Jamesian complexity, or Dreiserian "simple-mindedness", was now the touchstone of literary value, and the battles Dreiser had fought against hypocrisy and censorship were forgotten.

In recent years, the wheel of appreciation has turned back to Dreiser for his haunting illumination of the way both society and character spin the rope that lashes a man to his tragic destiny. Last year *Sister Carrie* was finally published as it was written almost a century ago, its expurgated "shocks" restored, and now this meticulously edited volume of the diaries has also appeared to confirm the permanence of Dreiser's appeal. Yet for the common reader the diaries present a problem, offering as they do a tiresome excess of quotidian detail about the man and scarcely anything worth knowing about the writer. They have no intrinsic literary value, nor did Dreiser intend them to have, since he was plainly writing the notes to himself alone. Indeed, they are not so much written as sprinkled like salt and pepper on the page. And the man herein revealed is not winning. In reading W. A. Swanberg's 1965 biography of Dreiser, the most tediously exhaustive documentation to date, one recoils from the mean-spirited, stingy, deceitful bully who treated his women as abominably as he did his publishers (especially the much-abused Horace Liveright), his agents, and many of his friends. Though the diaries deal with only a fraction of Dreiser's seventy-five years, they bear out Swanberg's portrait abundantly, and arouse a profound distaste at the making public of such dismaying privacy.

Of course Dreiser is hardly a unique example of the moral gulf that so often separates the actions of the man from the mind of the writer. But the diaries provide us with little that we need to know about this man the better to understand his work. Perhaps the secrets Dreiser intended to share only with himself really belong in the archives, where they might be of use to specialists, and not in the public domain, not because they are offensive but because, in the truest sense, they are irrelevant.

From fiction to faith

George Watson

C. S. Lewis
Of This and Other Worlds
Edited by Walter Hooper
192pp. Collins. £7.95.
0 00 215608 3

C. S. Lewis was more of a prodigy than a professor. In the quarter-century and a bit that elapsed between *The Allegory of Love* (1936) and his death in 1963 he produced over forty books. There had been three before that, before he found his feet – in fact he seems to have started writing stories at the age of six; and since his death there have been a dozen and more collections of essays and letters. Novels, romances, children's books, theology, science fiction, literary history and criticism, even poems: it is a prodigious output for a man who only lived to be sixty-five and who pursued the hard-pressed life of a teaching academic – first at Oxford, and for the last nine years at Cambridge – to which authorship always took second place.

This new collection of twenty essays, nine of which appeared in 1966 as *Of Other Worlds*, is mainly about story. Lewis seldom speaks of narrative, and narratology is a term he would not have savoured. As the opening salvo "On Stories" proclaims, the whole issue amounts to the Great Neglected of criticism, or did in his time. Aristotle, Boccaccio and Jung apart, there is no significant account in the Western critical tradition of what compels a child to listen or an adult to read. Why do we care about invented stories? The book deals lovingly with Lewis's own favourites, with his friends Charles Williams, Dorothy Sayers and Tolkien, as well as Rider Haggard and George Orwell – and is not designed as a manifesto. But it bristles with sharp argumentative points, combatively offered, and comes close to offering a convincing aesthetic of story as a literary art.

Lewis was not primarily a realist, though he read the great realist novelists with an affection that was always more than tolerant. The editor, in an embarrassingly hero-worshipping preface, speaks of him striding out of the prison of realism, though I suspect he thought of it less as a prison than as a health-farm. It was a starved place, to his mind, though all right for a curative visit. Art exists above all to give us what life does not: "To present what the narrow and desperately practical perspectives of real life exclude". Belief has nothing to do with it. Fairy tales are not loved by children because they believe them. Many children do not love them, in any case, while many sceptical adults do. Children, as he trenchantly argues, are after all not a distinct race; and it is not the business of those who write for them, as he did in the Narnia stories, to write down. We do not in any case read on because we are curious to know what happens next. When we re-read – and second readings of stories are often better than first readings – we already know what happens next. We read for a sense of other worlds – of that dense coherence of atmosphere that is the end both of art and of life: "trying to catch in our net of successive moments something that is not successive". Suspense is not curiosity, then, but the apprehension of a world other than our own: of a Wagner opera, of *The Wind in the Willows*, of Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* – a work he instantly and enthusiastically reviewed in articles

Along with George Orwell, whom he never knew and did not always approve, Lewis now looks like the finest British polemicist of the mid-century. His 1955 essay on Orwell here is admittedly a little disappointing; it is persuasive of Lewis to prefer *Animal Farm* to *1984*, though hardly on grounds that have so much to do with sex. Their politics, in any case, were largely opposite. Lewis was a total conservative, but in no sense of the Right, like Pound and Eliot: a democrat, as he explains in a withering reply to the Marxist scientist J. B. S. Haldane, because he believed all other kinds of government to be worse, a Christian from his early thirties, and an ardent hater of theocracy. "If we must have a tyrant, a robber baron is far better than an Inquisitor", since greed sleeps more easily than dogmatic certainty. His attack on Haldane's Soviet-worship still looks cogent and urgent: "Where Mammon vacates the throne, how if Moloch takes his place?"

Lewis's interest in politics, for all that, was only fitful, and his sense of literary civilization easily counts for more. A war-time paper "The Parthenon and the Optative" now looks even more compelling than when it first appeared in 1944. A grim old classic once complained, to Lewis's approval, that schoolteachers talk too much about the Parthenon's appreciation and culture-gush – and too little about "hard, dry things like grammar and dates and prosody" or the Optative. It is only in the last few years that advanced educational opinion has started to move towards the Optative, or to the hard and the dry, in a shift of opinion Lewis did not live to see. He would have loved to see it. He has taken nearly half a century to persuade schools and universities that literary education needs to be founded

and this not because personal appreciation does not matter, but because it matters too much to be learnt pat from another or manhandled in a three-hour paper. Those who complain that literature was spoiled for them at school by dry facts might equally claim to be saints, as Lewis acidly remarks, had they never been examined in Scripture, or heroes had they never been in the school OTC. A brisk way with claptrap is altogether his style. "We only have their word for it; and how do *they* know?"

Some of Lewis's excursions into critical theory have worn less well than this, and his digressive conversation with fellow-novelists Aldiss and Amis, interrupted by smokes and whisky, was worth keeping only for its momentary sallies: "I'd sooner live among people who don't cheat at cards than among people who are earnest about not cheating." The moral effects of literary study are indeed such as to make one wonder how the Arnoldian tradition can have managed to survive for so long. A little Boswellian editing, all the same, might have made this whiff of conversation more telling.

The real substance of the book lies in its grasp of the relation between fiction and faith. Lewis held Christianity to be an escape from superstition rather than from atheism. Since most of the superstitions he knew were modern – Theosophy, Yogi, Marx and Freud – he was inevitably anti-modern. Christianity is "true myth"; science fiction having been pioneered by modernists like H. G. Wells, Lewis and Tolkien set out deliberately in the 1930s to create a Christian counterpart. "Tollers", he told his friend, "there is too little of what we really like in stories: I am afraid we shall have to write some ourselves."

Lewis believed as a conservative in what now passes in criticism for Radical Chic: the denial of authorial intention, or what in Paris is called the Death of the Author; and the demotion of realism to the status of an artifice as elaborate as that of fantasy. Lewis always knew that it is not only or chiefly realists that describe the real. "Sometimes Fairy Stories May Say Best What's to Be Said", as he called an article in 1956. The rules of the game have changed round since then, and what Lewis defiantly offered in Old Hat now looks like Dernier Cri. He might not have welcomed that. But he would surely have been amused at the spectacle of a Franco-American School of Narratology offering the convictions of his youth as the latest thing, and getting away with it. He always admired effrontery, before swatting it down.

In Paris and Yale "traditionalism" now means literary history. I believe that Lewis, with his disdain for realism and his passion for the Italian epics and *The Lord of the Rings*, belongs to a critical tradition easily older than the historical, which hardly began at all in our universities until the present century, and that his arguments show up the *nouveaux critiques* for the fractionaries they unwittingly are. What is more, his sense of life and art hangs together far better than theirs. Realism is a claim to know the world, and very often to change it. How could we offer to change it unless we claimed to know it? It is by its very essence radical, then, more often than not, as Smollett, Dickens and Flaubert were radicals. Formalism is for conservatives. Odd that so many critics today refuse to look at that blindingly obvious truth about the nature of fiction, and salutary to have so eloquent a teacher to hand to remind

September Books '82

Temples, Churches and Mosques
A Guide to the Appreciation of Religious Architecture
J.G. DAVIES
Every year millions of travellers visit countless temples, churches and mosques throughout the world. This book shows them how to enjoy the buildings as architecture, presenting them not just as historical monuments but as masterpieces of art. J. G. Davies examines the essential nature and characteristics of the major historical styles of religious architecture, from the temples of the Nile to Baroque and Rococo churches.
272 pages, numerous illustrations £12.50
(0 631 12887 5)

Man Made Life
A Genetic Engineering Primer
JEREMY CHERFAS
The first clear and readable account of what may be the most important scientific development of the twentieth century. The new science of genetic engineering is a double-edged sword with the power to bring enormous good: cheap drugs, fuel, food and cures for hitherto untreatable diseases. But, it could also unleash a nightmare epidemic and bring to life now the creatures of futuristic fantasy.
280 pages, hardback £16.00 (0 631 13026 6)
paperback £5.50 (0 631 13027 6)

The Rape of Clarissa
Writing, Sexuality and Class Struggle in Samuel Richardson
TERRY EAGLETON
Samuel Richardson is probably the most neglected of the great English novelists, and, in this remarkable and arresting study, Terry Eagleton seeks to reclaim him for our own time as one of the most pioneering and revolutionary authors of English literature.
320 pages, hardback £12.00 (0 631 13029 2)
paperback £4.50 (0 631 13031 4)

Spirit of Wit
Reconsiderations of Rochester
Edited by JEREMY TREGLOWN
Rochester's poetry has attracted an unusually wide range of response that testifies to its intriguing complexity. Although his work has always been enjoyed, it has not been until recently that authentic texts of the poems have become generally available. *Spirit of Wit* is the first collection of modern essays on Rochester. Nine new collections from distinguished critics consider him from a number of angles and offer fresh insights.
208 pages, £14.00 (0 631 12897 2)

Fiction and Repetition
Seven English Novels
J. HILLIS MILLER
'As interesting for the light it casts on current literary criticism as for the individual studies it contains.' *Times Higher Education Supplement*
'Easily the most important book on fiction in a decade . . . It is not too much to claim that *Fiction and Repetition* will join the select few of seminal works on the novel . . .' *British Book News*
260 pages, £12.50 (0 631 13032 6)

Figures of Literary Discourse
GERARD GENETTE
A selection of eleven representative articles in theory and criticism from Genette's first three essay collections. It ranges from structuralist poetics to narrative theory and analysis of the major novelists Stendhal, Flaubert and Proust, and offers a coherent systematic account of literary theory.
324 pages, £15.00 (0 631 13089 5)

A Guide to Old English
Revised with Texts and Glossary
BRUCE MITCHELL and FRED C. ROBINSON
Established as the most thorough and most stimulating introduction to the language of Anglo-Saxon England, this revised edition of *A Guide to Old English* adds ten basic texts, together with full notes and a comprehensive glossary.
256 pages, hardback £15.00 (0 631 12798 4)
paperback £5.95 (0 631 12735 6)

Thomas More: History and Providence
ALISTAIR FOX
The first comprehensive account of Thomas More's intellectual career, this book counterpoints his inner spiritual life, his writings and his public life with his evolving world view. Alistair Fox shows that one intellectual preoccupation links all More's writings: an attempt to find the nature of divine providence by which he believed the world must be ruled.
284 pages, £17.50 (0 631 13094 2)

On History
And Other Essays
MICHAEL OAKESHOTT
This important new book considers three topics: historiography, the rule of law and the Tower of Babel. The first part is an independent and original treatment of the logic of historical understanding, and is concerned with issues such as the nature of an historical event, the notion of an historically understood past and what is meant by historical change.
(October) 208 pages, c. £9.50 (0 631 13114 0)

Religion and National Identity
Studies in Church History, Volume 18
Edited by STUART MEWS
Articles discussing the interaction at every social level, and within every social category and milieu, between religious belief, practice, tradition and ideals and nationalist preoccupations from the late antique to the contemporary world.
634 pages, £19.50 (0 631 18060 5)

Last Writings
on the Philosophy of Psychology
Volume I
LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN
Edited by G. H. von WRIGHT and HEIKKI NYMAN
This first volume was written between October 1948 and March 1949, when Wittgenstein was having one of his most fruitful working periods and constitutes the source material for Part II of the *Philosophical Investigations*.
274 pages, £19.50 (0 631 12895 6)

Wittgenstein
G. H. von WRIGHT
Professor von Wright, a pupil and friend of Wittgenstein, has collected together eight studies of Wittgenstein's life and writings. They record the reliable facts of his life and retrieve all the information which is still available relating to the chronology and composition of his writings. Von Wright avoids interpretation and concentrates on providing source material which will be of permanent value to anyone studying Wittgenstein.
222 pages, £12.00 (0 631 13099 3)

Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language
SAUL A. KRIPKE
In this trenchant inquiry Saul Kripke brings his powerful philosophical mind to bear on Wittgenstein's analysis of the notion of following a rule, believing that it is central to his later philosophy. Kripke holds that Wittgenstein's celebrated 'Private language' argument, whose interpretation and validity have been the subject of much philosophical debate, is best interpreted in terms of this question.
160 pages, £9.50 (0 631 13077 2)

Berkeley
New Edition
G. J. WARNOCK
'His exposition and criticism are exact, coherent and lucid.' *Times Literary Supplement*
In this new, revised edition of his classic introduction, G. J. Warnock examines all Berkeley's major philosophical works and discusses his most original and interesting contributions to questions still debated by philosophers today.
240 pages, hardback £15.00 (0 631 13097 7)
paperback £5.95 (0 631 13119 1)

Women, Reason and Nature
Some Philosophical Problems with Feminism
CAROL McMILLAN
Carol McMillan sets out to disprove the philosophical assumption that the irreducible biological differences between men and women entail inferiority or superiority. She shows that all human activity presupposes reasoned behaviour, and makes a forthright assault on all the popular misconceptions which ultimately lead to an undervaluing of women.
176 pages, £12.50 (0 631 12496 9)

Dialogues on Morality and Religion
JAKOB FRIEDRICH FRIES
Edited by D. Z. Phillips
These dialogues are the central parts of what Fries called a 'philosophical novel'. In them he wanted to show that the fundamental issues of philosophy – questions, for example, about the point of existence – could be discussed in ordinary language.
268 pages, £18.00 (0 631 10071 7)

The Shaping of Man
Philosophical Aspects of Sociobiology
ROGER TRIGG
Why do people behave as they do? Is there such a thing as a universal human nature, or do people differ fundamentally from society to society? This book addresses the perennial scientific, philosophical and moral problem that underlies these questions: whether cultural influence or genetic endowment is the decisive factor in the shaping of man.
206 pages, hardback £12.50 (0 631 13023 3)
paperback £5.95 (0 631 13028 4)

Rationality and Relativism
Edited by MARTIN HOLLIS and STEVEN LUKES
The book takes its inspiration from the debate encapsulated in *Rationality* edited by Bryan Wilson (1970), but extends it into new fields and into current discussion. Martin Hollis, Steven Lukes and Ernest Gellner contribute the developments in their own thought, and are joined by Ian Hacking, W. Newton-Smith, Charles Taylor, Jon Elster, Dan Sperber, Barry Barnes and David Bloor.
(October) 320 pages, hardback £16.00
(0 631 12773 9)
paperback £6.50 (0 631 13126 4)

Against Epistemology
THEODOR ADORNO
The long-awaited translation of one of Adorno's most important works: it inspired Habermas and Marcuse, and continues to influence other eminent thinkers in philosophy and the social sciences today. It is written in a relatively simple style and can serve as an introduction to Adorno's later and more difficult writings.
(October) 256 pages, £15.00 (0 631 12843 3)

The Limits to Capital
DAVID HARVEY
Written by one of the most influential social theorists of his generation, this book is nothing less than a complete re-exposition and extension of Marx's analysis of capitalism. It is an exploration of the limits to Marxian theory, and of the limits to capitalism itself as a social system.
496 pages, £15.00 (0 631 12968 5)

Modern French Marxism
MICHAEL KELLY
This is the first full-length study of French Marxist philosophy and social theory, from its origins to the present day. It provides a critical assessment of the way in which French Marxists have tried to understand human thought in relation to the world, and shows the historical circumstances which have shaped their efforts.
246 pages, £13.00 (0 631 13202 3)

Ideology and Social Psychology
Moderation, Extremism and Contradiction
MICHAEL BILLIG
This book is about the crucial relationship between social psychology and ideologies. It is concerned on the one hand with the psychological ambitions of left and right wing ideologies and, on the other, with the ideological components of social psychological theory.
250 pages, £13.50 (0 631 13063 2)

Choice, Welfare and Measurement
AMARTYA SEN
'Sen's mastery in the fields of social choice, the foundations of welfare economics and, more broadly, distributive ethics and the measurement problems associated with these fields is unquestioned. The selection of articles fully reflects his work in this area . . . a number of papers are already classics in the field.' *Kenneth Arrow*
468 pages, £19.50 (0 631 12914 6)

Monetarist, Keynesian and New Classical Economics
JEROME L. STEIN
Where once Keynesian theory reigned supreme, three competing schools now coexist, each offering very different explanations for inflation, unemployment and the decline in growth. In this important new work, a well-known economist examines the hypotheses of each. The results are startling and sure to stimulate further debate.
(October) 240 pages, £15.00 (0 631 12908 1)

The Control of Resources
PARTHA DASGUPTA
Most textbooks in environmental economics either sink under the weight of complex mathematical models or resort to a recital of case studies. What makes this book, by one of the world's leading experts, so useful is the careful blend of theory and practice.
256 pages, hardback £16.50 (0 631 12935 9)
paperback £6.95 (0 631 13086 1)

Arctic and Antarctic
A Modern Geographical Synthesis
DAVID SUGDEN
This up-to-date synthesis of the physical and human geography of polar regions offers valuable insights into areas where mineral wealth has created a conflict of interest between indigenous peoples, governments and multinational corporations.
480 pages, £29.50 (0 631 13065 3)

from **Basil Blackwell** Publisher
108 Cowley Road, Oxford OX4 1JF

The reticent Prime Minister

Kenneth O. Morgan

KENNETH HARRIS

Attlee

630pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £14.95.
0 297 77993 1

Clement Attlee is our Unknown Prime Minister. Compared with him, Bonar Law (to whom the term was originally attached) is a model of transparency. Attlee's enigmatic, reticent style was celebrated, perhaps notorious, during his lifetime. His autobiography, *As It Happened*, is so unrevealing as to be almost comic. "Quite an exciting day", was his considered verdict on July 27, 1945, the day he went to the Palace to become prime minister. His volume of reminiscences *A Prime Minister Remembers*, has been described by A. J. P. Taylor as being notable for showing what a prime minister forgets. None of the memoirs of the period of Attlee's heyday, from the diaries of Dalton to those of Crossman, have shed any particularly revealing light on Attlee's personality ideas, hopes, fears, tensions or uncertainties. Television interviews in his last years proved equally unsuccessful. Appropriately enough his private papers in Oxford and in Cambridge are sparse and uncommunicative. They tell us little of the mighty events that punctuated his premiership. Years which saw the winning of world war, the building of the welfare state, independence of India, the founding of Nato, the secret development of Britain's nuclear weapons programme, are as dust in a career which embodied the useful, if limited, talents of the public-school headmaster and the country solicitor, transmuted into a kind of genius.

It is, therefore, a supremely difficult task that Kenneth Harris has set himself over the years in trying to write a full authorized biography of this impenetrable but formidable statesman who, almost by stealth, managed to transform the course of British and international history over six momentous years. Mr Harris deserves warm congratulations on a notable achievement. His book, perhaps, has its limitations. Much the worst of them is, presumably, the fault of his publishers, not of the author, namely the failure to have any citation of sources in footnotes, or a proper bibliography. These defects are a grave disservice to author and reader alike, and detract from the value of an important and highly informative book.

Other apparent shortcomings can all be justified. For instance, the sources used, despite Harris's devoted labours, are in some respects incomplete. He has made excellent use of the Cabinet papers in the Public Record Office, but apparently none of the prime ministers' files which are more revealing of Attlee's outlook on major themes such as Palestine, India, or economic policy. The Foreign Office files could also have been used to advantage since, on Harris's own showing, Attlee was a decisive figure in the conduct of foreign affairs throughout the period from 1945 to 1951. On the other hand, a biographer can hardly be blamed for not plunging further into the vast Charybdis of the public records from 1939 which have swallowed up without trace many a dry-as-dust pedant before now. Other new material that the author brings to bear, notably private papers from Attlee's family, and valuable interviews with over a score of politicians, civil servants, aides, personal acquaintances and others, more than redress the balance.

Again, the book is certainly austere in style, peculiarly appropriate for one as self-contained and puritanical as Attlee. There is barely a joke in its 300,000-plus words, unless the extracts of doggerel verse penned by Attlee on topics ranging from Gallipoli to Harold Macmillan are intended to be humorous. However, the artist is restricted by his material. Introducing sparkle into a treatment of Attlee's career is an impossible task. Nor can drama be injected into Attlee's private or family life where none apparently existed apart from Mrs Attlee's driving methods. The style of the book is impeccably lucid; the conclusion is arresting and even moving. The standard of factual accuracy is very high. The only error worth mentioning is one by the printers who turn Lord Ammon, chairman of the Dock Labour Board and Labour whip in the Lords, into "Lord Annan", surely not a Freudian blemish.

Another problem is that concentrating on Attlee's leadership of the party and the government tends to downgrade his close colleagues, sometimes with unfair results. Herbert Morrison usually appears here as a self-seeking intriguer – "couldn't stand the fellow"; the manager of a supremely efficient legislative and parliamentary team for six years seldom surfaces. Aneurin Bevan is another constant difficulty for the prime minister, unstable, always liable to "emotional spasms" at awkward moments. His building up of the National Health Service is not discussed. No wonder, with two such colleagues, that Attlee cast his vote for Gaitskell in 1955. Again, Arthur Creech-Jones was simply "one of my mistakes" to Attlee, not the architect of a new and enlightened colonial development policy. Presumably ground-nuts buried everything else. But these defects are in the nature of biography, which inevitably foreshortens and distorts to some degree. A biography of Attlee cannot provide an analysis of the Labour movement under his leadership, nor can it provide a study of the structure or typology of a party which could throw up such a man to lead at such a time. Biography has its real merits, too. In this case, it powerfully illuminates the dark, hidden centre of a major government, hitherto quite impenetrable.

Harris, then, has written a considerable book. It provides valuable material on aspects of wartime politics, on the nature of Cabinet government after 1945, on the transfer of power in India, on the 1950–51 Labour administration, and many other matters. Scholars and enthusiasts will for ever be in the author's debt. With other major works forthcoming, such as Alan Bullock's final volume on Bevin, Ben Pimlott's edition of Dalton's diaries, and Philip Williams's of Gaitskell's, we shall be better able to propel the 1945–51 Labour government out of the mists of prehistory into the more demanding world of historical reality.

As for Attlee's early career, the main features are already well established. We learn again of the remarkable impact, on a conventional middle-class product of Haileybury and Oxford, of social work in the Edwardian East End. On the other hand, while a forceful member of the ILP, unlike many in that party Attlee had few qualms about taking the "patriotic" view of the First World War. From mayor of Stepney, he rose without trace into parliament and junior office in the first two Labour governments. He was lucky not to be in MacDonald's cabinet in August 1931 and have to commit himself on cuts in unemployment benefit. He was lucky to keep his seat in the 1931 election when almost all his experienced colleagues lost theirs. He was supremely lucky to succeed Lansbury as leader in 1935, aided by having served as acting leader in the recent past. But he rode his luck. He rose steadily in stature during the years of Spain and Munich. He easily survived attempts by Laski, Ellen Wilkinson and others to dislodge him. By May 1940 his authority was unchallengeable. It was reinforced during the war years when, as Harris clearly demonstrates, he was far more than an anonymous chairman of committees. He was an active policy-maker in international affairs, and an effective critic of Churchill's methods of conducting the premiership. He had himself evolved a powerful analysis of the techniques of Cabinet government. Few men were better equipped for the highest office than was Attlee in July 1945.

The years of the premiership from 1945 to 1951 are, quite rightly, the core of Harris's book. His account will form an enduring contribution to political history. He shows – and the prime ministers' files in the PRO confirm the point – that Attlee was much more than merely a grey, anonymous director of a myriad of interlocking Cabinet committees. He was a strong, clear-minded leader who, especially in the 1945–47 period, often intervened in Cabinet to devastating effect. He took on obstreperous colleagues, even Bevin on occasion, and unsentimentally cut them down to size. He showed marked gifts in handling potentially explosive party conferences, or meetings of the parliamentary party. In one crucial area, Attlee's role was utterly decisive. On India, he had a special expertise, following his membership of the abortive Simon commission in 1927–30. At every stage of Cabinet deliberation, Attlee's influence was crucial in the timing and direction of British policy, from the vital parallel decision to speed up independence for Burma in 1946 to the extreme rapidity of the evacuation of British forces in the summer of 1947. Mountbatten's aide could write of Attlee, during these Indian discussions, "the man burns with a hidden fire". Harris staunchly defends Attlee's conduct of Indian policy; this reviewer can only record his total agreement. In foreign policy, too, Attlee's role was a powerful one, especially in 1950–51 over such weighty matters as the Korean war, German rearmament and the Persian oil crisis. With Bevin ailing and Morrison seemingly out of his depth at the Foreign Office, Attlee alone gave a firmness and consistency to British policy then in a number of different theatres. Even in the controversial case of Palestine, Attlee's policy was sane and balanced.

More could, perhaps, be said about the other side of Attlee's qualities. He could handle difficult individuals with extreme dexterity – Cripps in 1947, Bevan until the spring of 1951. But he could not assume control when complex events were throwing the government quite off course. In the financial and political crises of 1947, Attlee failed to offer any real lead. His passivity in his hospital bed in April 1951 made the crisis of Bevan's challenge to Gaitskell's budget very much worse. On economic matters, he had seldom any great flights of originality. He had diminishing interest in nationalization, marginal concern with aspects of social reform; he showed the negative features that "consolidation" implied. In the last phase of Labour party leadership from 1951 to 1955, Attlee genuinely believed that his continued presence at the top would help moderate the feud between Gaitskell and Bevan, and help resolve policy differences on Germany and the bomb. Without doubt, this interlude made things worse, and the gulf between the Gaitskellites and the Bevanites much more unbridgeable. Inadvertently, Labour in the 1950s was removed as a credible party of government.

A complete life of Clement Attlee leads, inevitably, to wider reflection on his public style. He was not an intellectual, certainly not a man with a zest for the interchange of new ideas. Bevin called him "our Campbell-Bannerman", which is not altogether a compliment. It is somehow appropriate that, when Harris asked Attlee of which other country he would have liked to be a citizen, the unerring answer that came was Denmark. But he was a strong, self-sustained man. The *New Statesman*'s portrait of him in the Fifties was headed "The Egoist". This book does not confirm the old view of Attlee's modesty. On the contrary, he was an arrogant little man with much to be arrogant about. He had a firm view of the limitations of nearly all his colleagues – Cripps, Morrison, Dalton, Bevan, Shinwell, Gaitskell included. Only King George VI, Bevin and his septuagenarian colleague, Lord Addison, kindled his genuine enthusiasm. Throughout, Attlee's slow-burning, taciturn qualities were used to advantage. He illustrated perfectly the old Roman tag that if you remain silent you are considered a philosopher. Yet here was a man whose talents were unique and indispensable, a man of profound moral courage. He embodied, in his own Strube-like person, Bagehot's definition of the statesman (applied to Peel), "the powers of a first-rate man and the creed of a second-rate man".

Like all the great political leaders, like Peel or Asquith, Attlee was buoyed up by a sense of his own indispensability. The party was created in his own image. Nor did his ILP heritage desert him. From the nationalization of hospitals to the recognition of Communist China, his instincts took him often into the radical camp. There is something in Kenneth Younger's later judgment that Attlee was "the outside left member of his Cabinet". His talents enabled him to hold together an extraordinary team of gifted prime donnas, to weld his party into a rare mood of united purpose, to transform his country into a welfare democracy, and the empire into a multiracial commonwealth. He imposed his elusive personality on an entire generation. We are essentially products of the Age of Attlee. The monuments of that intense, indomitable, noble little man still lie, modestly veiled no doubt, all around us.

The reluctant President

J. A. Thompson

JUDITH ICKE ANDERSON

William Howard Taft: An Intimate History

277pp. Norton. £12.50.
0 393 01462 2

Recently it has been said that the only indispensable qualifications for becoming President of the United States are a driving desire to do so and the lack of other employment, so that one can devote the years of organization and campaigning necessary to win a nomination. Thus it now seems anomalous in the extreme that seventy years ago the office was held by a man who not only made hardly any effort to attain it but openly professed his lack of both the desire and the capacity to discharge its duties. "It is my storm", William Howard Taft declared gloomily when it snowed on his inauguration. "I always said it would be a cold day when I got to be president of the United States."

The position Taft really aspired to was the one he achieved nine years after his overwhelming rejection by the electorate in 1912 – Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. As President, he had had the galling experience of appointing another man to "the one place in the government which I would have liked to fill myself". However, ten years earlier, while Governor-General of the Philippines, Taft had declined two invitations to be nominated to the Supreme Court; despite his frequently proclaimed distaste for politics, he went on to become Secretary of War and then President. It is this "paradox" and "puzzle" that provides the focus of Judith Anderson's book. In addressing it, Professor Anderson, a pupil of the late Fawn Brodie, has concentrated on Taft's psychological development and his most intimate relationships. She has not attempted to supersede Henry Pringle's comprehensive biography, published in 1939, and her account of Taft's public career, which is quite brisk though not novel, is simply the background to the story.

Anderson's approach at least has the virtue of giving serious attention to Taft's most striking characteristic – his size. Always a heavy man, as President he weighed over twenty-five stone. A special bathtub had to be installed in the White House, and an extra wide door in his Ford sedan. Taft's dimensions inspired jokes, including some by himself, at the time, but the author is the first to use "the rapidly expanding medical literature on the subject of obesity" in order to seek insight into Taft's particular psychological make-up". She points out that Taft put on a lot of weight as President (as Secretary of War and later Chief Justice he was a mere eighteen stone), and takes this as a sign of stress and unhappiness. Admitting that his obesity may have arisen from a glandular condition, she is persuaded that "it was clearly aggravated by feelings of inadequacy in the face of the pressures and influences of his ambitious and demanding parents".

Taft's emotional insecurity persisted beyond his youth, according to Anderson, and he continued to need the reassurance he acquired through others' approval of his achievements. He sought to replicate in his marriage his relationship with his parents, and consequently his wife, Nellie, had great influence over him. It was she who steered him away from a judicial career in Ohio towards Washington and the White House. Anderson suggests that Nellie, an unusually capable and ambitious woman who had been frustrated and unhappy as a Victorian young lady, saw Taft as "an instrument through which she could fulfil her own aspirations". She was later to revel in her quasi-regal role in the Philippines and her status as First Lady, although soon after entering the White House she suffered a stroke which incapacitated her for most of a year. Partly for this reason, Anderson sees it, Taft as President finally grew out of his emotional dependence on others and for the rest of his career, including his happy and successful Chief Justiceship, he was at last his own man.

Professor Anderson documents this story with quotations from family letters and Nellie's reminiscences, and in its broad outlines it is credible enough, though perhaps not quite as original as she claims. (The obituaries of Nellie seem to have been fairly candid about her role in pushing Taft into politics.) But at times the case is pressed a little too hard. For example, Taft's judicial conservatism was profound and life-long, and it is hard to believe that his opposition to the recall of judges "originated" with his wife. More broadly, the concentration on Taft's private anxieties and comparative neglect of his public performances fails to account for the success of his career. There is, too, an unresolved paradox about Anderson's treatment of Taft's Presidency. On the one hand, she presents it as the point when his psychological weaknesses – extreme sensitivity to criticism, procrastination and indecisiveness, escapism (much is made of the time he spent playing golf and travelling around the country) were most apparent and debilitating. On the other hand, she believes it was then that he achieved real maturity.

The premise of this book is that Taft as President was a failure because he was peculiarly unfitted for an office that he never wanted. Taft was undeniably inept, but one should not underestimate the objective difficulties of his position. When he assumed office, the progressive insurgency had already created divisions in the Republican party that may well have been unbridgeable. The tariff issue that caused Taft so much trouble had been ducked by his predecessor, Theodore Roosevelt. Certainly, *pace* Anderson, the Republicans' defeat in the 1910 congressional elections can not simply be attributed to the President's blunders. But, above all, it is hard to see how Taft could have survived the return from the African jungle of Theodore Roosevelt, the man who, as Professor Anderson emphasizes, more or less single-handedly made him President. At fifty-one, "the Colonel" was in no mood to retire, or to play second fiddle to his former lieutenant. He launched a radical crusade that alarmed his more conservative friends and, in Henry Cabot Lodge's words, "turned Taft from a man into a principle". When in 1912 Roosevelt "stood at Armageddon and battled for the Lord" as the presidential candidate of the "Bull Moose" Progressive Party, it was he who aroused the passions of his countrymen, while Taft, for all his bulk, faded into the background.

Of carriers and kings

Patricia Highsmith

MARTIN HART

Rats

Translated by Arnold Pomerans

172pp. Allison and Busby. £8.95
0 85031 297 3

Most people think of rats as abhorrent creatures, carriers of dread and possibly fatal diseases. Squirrels are but rats with bushy tails, says Martin Hart, a Dutch ethologist (a term meaning an observer of animal behaviour). Then why is it more pleasant to let a squirrel take a peanut from one's hand than to feed a rat a piece of cheese in the same manner? Squirrels move in a charming way. Rats prowl furtively over garbage, or emerge wet and filthy from sewer outlets. The average person's antipathy to rats will not be much dispelled by this book, even though the author says that a rat can be kept as a friendly household pet, and that only cornered rats are apt to attack or bite. Yet the fair minded Hart relates on page two a favourite story of his father's: his father's grandmother successfully cornered and killed a rat in her chicken coop, and "with a chuckle" showed her husband two small wounds on her wrist. The wounds became weals, and before midnight of the same day she was dead.

Hart's nine chapters tell the rat's history, describe its forebears and relations, its behaviour in freedom and in cages, its reproduction; and the last chapter compares men and rats. Rat nightmares may be made worse by learning that a rat population, when halved by pesticides in a controlled experiment in a sewer-like environment, multiplies with extra rapidity, so that in a matter of weeks the population is back to what it used to be. There is no sure way to exterminate *rats*. A chapter is devoted to Rat Control, with discouraging conclusions. There are detailed descriptions of poisons and their efficacy. Coumaria powder, known also as Warfarin, is an anti-coagulant so readily eaten and so slow in action, that other rats keep coming for it. The results are fatal, but – there is always a hitch – in 1958 it was discovered that rats in a town in Scotland had become immune to Warfarin, and shortly afterwards a similar phenomenon was noticed in Wales. The immune Welsh rats were studied, and it was found that immunity was a dominant genetic factor, when resistant rats were crossed with rats never exposed to Warfarin.

The book's fifty black-and-white photographs show rats at play, nursing, fighting, mating, going through the rituals of "I am the conqueror" and "I accept defeat", in which picture the defeated is literally pressed down by both forepaws of the conqueror, though otherwise not injured. Three photographs and one X-ray photograph are of rat kings, which seem especially to intrigue the author. A rat king is not chief of the clan, but a name given by German observers (*Rattenkoenig*) to a number of rats whose tails have become inextricably entangled. This sight must have caused shock and superstitious speculations among the people of the Middle Ages. How could such a thing have come about? The X-ray photograph of the king of Rutphen (1963 discovery) shows seven rats' tails, the last thirds of which are snarled like a tangle of knitting wool in the centre of the picture, while each of the seven tails leads to the limp hind quarters of a rat. Many kings are composed of dead rats, because none can move in any direction to find food and, as the author remarks, it is unlikely that their fellow rats are going to toss them anything to eat. Other kings are discovered alive, when their squeals betray their positions.

What causes rat kings? Many are the wild ideas, and Hart sets them all forth. Could a human being have tied them? Have the rats brought something sticky into their nests, and in their movements caused their tails to be stuck together? But the tails are not stuck, they are tangled and knotted. The most likely explanation would seem to be that several rats in a confined space, perhaps startled by noise, or an enemy, or by boiling water, run madly about, over and under one another, so that the extremities of their tails inevitably cross, resulting finally in a knot which they cannot undo, the kind of knot that becomes harder the more they pull in various directions. Hart has remarked callouses on some tails, showing that the rats struggled for some time. One anecdote is of a farmer who saw a rat in a hole in his floorboard, poured boiling water down, then was unable to pull the dead rat out. He had to enlarge the aperture, and then he discovered the rat was attached to several others in a rat king.

A rat king was noted as early as 1612 in Danzig, consisting of nine adults. "The Emblem of Johannes Sambuccus", 1564, reproduced in a full-page woodcut illustration, shows a rat king of seven in the foreground, all straining away from their tied centre, while a man rises a stick to hit them, and another figure strolls away into a medieval landscape of houses, an arched bridge, and flowers.

It is usual for rat kings to be put on display for some time after discovery. The two kings of Dollstadt (1835) were exhibited in various places; that consisting of twenty-eight rats could be seen in an inn and that with fourteen rats was on show in the woodman's shed in which it had been found. Occasionally newly discovered kings have been paraded through towns or villages so that everyone could have a good look at them. The rat king of Leipzig was kept – from 1722 onwards – in mummified form in the private museum of Dr Petermann. I often imagine the man whom I admire more than anyone else, with the possible exception of Mozart, Johann Sebastian Bach – who lived in Leipzig from 5 May 1725 – going to view this particular king during a visit to Dr Petermann's museum. Unfortunately he composed no music for the occasion. Rats portrayed in music are very rare indeed, and since there is not enough material for a chapter on the subject I shall say a few words about it here. The most important rat in music is found in Prokofiev's beautiful opera *The Love of Three Oranges*. The particular rat is an ugly transformation of the Princess Ninetta. Both Schubert and Wolf have put Goethe's poem *Der Rattenfaenger* ("The Rat-Catcher") to music . . .

This paragraph typifies Hart's pleasantly rambling and personal style He is also a novelist and short-story writer. In his chapter on the behaviour of rats, however, he sharpens up and delivers a knock or two to Konrad Lorenz and B. F. Skinner. Hart is not inclined to anthropomorphize, and has no respect for scientists who leave tape-recorders on all night in the laboratory and expect to gather correct data from sound alone: of fighting, for instance, Rats do not always squeal when they fight.

Among the diseases that rats can transmit are: bubonic plague (via their fleas), Weil's disease (caused by a bacillus living in water, making fishermen, swimmers and even firemen liable to this fatal ailment if the water is impure), trichinosis, paratyphus, ratbite fever, foot-and-mouth disease and rabies – and this list is not complete. "Not the Rat but Man is to Blame", reads a section heading. Man keeps creating the edifices, offices, warehouses, sewers, poultry farms, pigsties and abattoirs that provide ideal dwellings for rat families. Hart also points out that man has eradicated the rats' natural enemies (cats? owls? the peregrine falcon? this reviewer would have liked more on the subject), and adds that whoever despoils nature has to pay a price.

> Are rats men in miniature? Whoever reads Skinner's extremely lucid expositions discovers that the writer does indeed consider human beings as complicated as rats. We have at any rate one thing (which Skinner does not mention) in common with rats: we exist in very large numbers. In the spring of 1973, the World Health Organisation reported that there were then on earth as many rats as there were human beings, namely 3.7 thousand million . . . . We also have in common with rats the ability to adapt well to all sorts of circumstances.

Hart does not go much beyond that, but he remarks, for example, that both men and rats play a great deal when young, and that play is essential for proper development. A deprived rat, one brought up in a barren cell or cage alone, will be a handicapped rat in later life. Readers in quest of further similarities to man might find them in the chapter on "The Behaviour of Rats" in the section on Sexual Behaviour.

It is particularly when the female is in oestrus – once every four or five days in the laboratory – that she will be followed by all the males in her cage . . . . If the female is not in oestrus, she may kick the partner with one of her hind legs . . . . If the female is in oestrus . . . she will then take the initiative, rushing toward the male, sniffing at him, and then running off in a highly characteristic manner, with a cautious prancing or skipping movement. She will always run a few inches at a time and then sit down with raised head and quivering ears . . . If the male does not follow her, the receptive female will approach him again, and again skip away. If he now follows and mounts her, she will raise her head higher still and her ears will begin to quiver violently until at a given moment they are laid back flat. Her back is now arched, the abdomen raised high. This posture is called *lordosis*.

Rats has an index of proper names, a page of bibliography. If this book does not tell you all you ever wanted to know about black rats and the more prevalent brown rat, you may pursue the subject, guided by the author's books of reference. This is a fascinating study by a scientist whose speciality has always been rats. Though highly readable, Martin Hart never tries to popularize his text or to hook the reader by a wild surmise that might not be accurate.



The ratsbane seller; a drawing by Gavarni reproduced from the book reviewed here.

Whither the worms

J. F. Watkins

ROBERT S. DESOWITZ

New Guinea Tapeworms and Jewish Grandmothers: Tales of Parasites and People

224pp. W. W. Norton. £9.25.
0 393 01474 6

Experts are often reluctant to talk about their subjects to laymen. The combination of natural courtesy (the listener may be bored) and arrogance (the listener is too ignorant to understand) is seen at its best in Oxford Senior Common Rooms, where it materializes as an embarrassed silence. Americans are different. For them, in Hazlitt's words, "whatever interests is interesting", and they rightly assume that what interests them will interest the man sitting next to them. All that matters is the presentation.

Parasitic worms, for example, can be very heavy going indeed. In the wrong hands the subject can be a social and intellectual disaster. Robert S. Desowitz is the right man for the job, with all his natural advantages. First, he is Professor of Tropical Medicine in the University of Hawaii. Second, he is a New Yorker. Internal evidence suffers fish is an "ambrosial concoction") suggests that he is a Jewish New Yorker. We can therefore expect a style that is free from any attempt at fine writing, pleasantly hard-boiled, humane without sentimentality, and spiced with mild wisecracks and vernacular expressions. This is what is provided, and it proves to be the most suitable literary idiom for talking about helminths and protozoa in a way which does not paralyse the audience with boredom or hysterical fear that at this very moment a dedicated maggot may be gnawing its way through their innards on its way to the brain. The idiom needs careful handling; occasionally Desowitz nods – three "right ons" in one page is perhaps excessive – but the overall effect is successful. The book could well be called "Table Talk of a Parasitologist", and I suspect that many a Hawaiian dinner party has been entertained by these stories before some more than usually intelligent hostess persuaded Desowitz to write it all down.

Images of evolution at its most pointless swim before our eyes. Consider Schistosomes. The female worm lies for ever enfolded in the male, attached to the wall of an abdominal vein. She does nothing but produce myriads of eggs which penetrate the intestine or bladder to reach the exterior. There the eggs hatch to produce little creatures which invade a water snail in whose body they become different little creatures which swim out to pierce the skin of any human who has business in the water. Once past the skin a little creature makes for a precise position in the veins, meets another of the opposite sex, concludes the union and completes the cycle. Goethe would have loved the pertinacity of these Elective Affinities. The worm is innocent enough. It is our immune reactions that make it the scourge of Africa and Asia. Schistosomes provide moral lessons about the dangers of tinkering with the environment, as Desowitz shows. The Volta River project has produced rises of infection rates from 1 per cent to 100 per cent in some lakeside villages. Let us not curse the Schistosome too roundly, though – by attacking the Chinese Communist troops on the banks of the Yangtse it saved Taiwan.

Parasites create all kinds of moral problems, in addition to their nasty physical consequences. For example, the customs or religious rituals of a society often create the conditions for infection. The Japanese taste for raw fish results in several hundred cases a year of anisakiasis (a worm boring into the intestinal wall), but Japanese culture would not crumble if the sale of raw fish were forbidden. In New Guinea, on the other hand, the eating of undercooked pig meat is a religious ritual essential to the life of the tribe. The pigs of one New Guinea tribe, the Ekari, have become infected with the pork tapeworm, and the insanitary habits of the tribesmen mean that they swallow tapeworm eggs. The eggs develop into larvae which invade the body and often settle down in the brain to produce epilepsy. The tribe will be severely weakened by this cysticercosis, but nothing can be done to stop it that would not destroy the society completely. Somalis hold two stones and click them together when defaecating. As a result, a splendid concrete water-sealed set of latrines put up in a village to reduce the incidence of hookworm became totally blocked by the discarded stones. Medical microbiology in these situations turns into social anthropology.

It may well be that all attempts to eradicate the parasitic diseases like malaria, sleeping sickness, river blindness and other worm infestations are bound to fail unless tropical Africa, tropical Asia and South America can be completely covered in concrete and tarmac. Public-health measures short of this extreme will produce local successes (usually temporary) but are, in the end, useless. African trypanosomiasis will probably never be eradicated, but if some magic drug appeared the consequences could be worse than the disease. Dr Desowitz writes: "As trypanosomiasis is conquered, overgrazing, soil erosion, social disruption, and faunal extinction may result". It would have been more accurate to write "will result". In our latitudes infectious disease appears as something alien, and the low temperatures prevent the more extravagant forms of parasitism. We are therefore conditioned to the idea that the neatly packaged, orderly bacteria and viruses which affect us can be wiped out or kept at bay without any disastrous ecological consequences. In the tropics, on the other hand, infectious agents like protozoa and worms are part of an enormous, pullulating, eco-system which is as tough and as resourceful as life itself. In that milieu human beings are nothing very special, just another link in the chain.

Why should anyone want to read a book like this? It can be read for the pleasure of contemplating some of the more bizarre of Nature's Wonders, but perhaps it should be read as a duty by anyone who does not understand why poor countries are poor. For medical students, who are overwhelmed by huge boring treatises which they must conquer, this is the best available text on parasitic diseases, although for this purpose it would be improved by illustrations. Indeed an appendix of photographs and charts should be added to the second edition for the enlightenment of any class of reader. Social anthropologists and spies will find the book essential for broadening their minds and contributing to their survival in the field – in Leningrad, for example, drinking tap water is almost certain to lead to Ghardiasis, an odious flatulent condition which the natives avoid by drinking vodka.

Nature's bits and pieces

M. F. Perutz

FRANÇOIS JACOB

The Possible and the Actual

71pp. University of Washington Press (AUPG). £6.30.
0 295 95888 X

Twenty-one years ago I heard François Jacob lecture about the ingenious experiments which led him and Jacques Monod to discover how bacteria switch on different genes to adapt themselves to different foods. He lectured in immaculate English with razor-sharp logic that left no conceivable loophole, yet seemed to be free of the intellectual's arrogance and to take his formidable powers of reasoning for granted, like good teeth, as a gift of Nature. The discovery solved one of the great puzzles in biology and brought him and Monod the Nobel Prize.

He has now written a short, popular book that sets his research in the context of the meaning of life. It comprises three lectures, on "Myth and Science", "Evolutionary Tinkering" and "Time and Invention of the Future". His first lecture begins, in true French style, with the meaning of sex. How did it originate? I had believed it sprang from Adam's rib, but here I learnt that in Plato's *Symposium* Aristophanes proposes, more correctly, that it was created by the splitting apart of hermaphrodites. According to the *Symposium* these spherical creatures were endowed with a bifacial head, four feet, four hands, and a double set of privates. Their strength and boldness began to worry Zeus who instructed Apollo to cut them into halves "as an egg with a horsehair". Jacob writes that this explains why, in the human body, reproduction is the only function performed by an organ of which an individual carries only one half, so that he has to waste an enormous amount of time and energy to find another half.

In fact, the origin of sex is unknown, even though a primitive form of it was discovered by William Hayes in the humble coli bacterium. Its biological purpose was first formulated almost, but not quite correctly, about 100 years ago by the German biologist August Weismann: "To produce individual differences through which natural selection creates new species." In sexual reproduction the parental genes are reshuffled twice; once in the production of germ cells and again after fertilization of the egg. As a result each progeny carries a different assortment of parental genes. Jacob writes: "Every child conceived by a given couple is the result of genetic lottery." Sex generates diversity which provides a safety margin against environmental uncertainty, but Weismann omitted mutation as an essential factor. Only when sexual reproduction is linked to random mutation and natural selection does a gene population evolve. It evolves faster with sex than one without sex.

Jacob writes that virtually all biologists today believe in Darwinism, but this is not true of laymen. When Monod published his lectures on *Chance and Necessity*, setting out of the molecular basis of evolution by random mutation and natural selection, he shocked European intellectuals because they could not accept the idea of life having evolved by chance rather than purposeful design. Even those who discounted a creator preferred Lamarck's instructionist theory of evolution by inheritance of acquired characters. Jacob writes:

> "Each carefully designed and strictly executed experiment planned to evaluate genetic instructionism has shown it to be wrong. . . . There is no molecular mechanism enabling instructions from the environment to be imprinted on DNA directly, that is, without the roundabout route of natural selection. Not that such a mechanism is theoretically impossible. Simply it does not exist.

All the same, any experiment purporting to prove the inheritance of acquired characters is hailed by the media as a well-deserved swipe at the arrogant scientific establishment. R. M. Gorczynski and E. J. Steele's recent experiments, which were supposed to prove the transfer of immunity acquired by the fathers of families of mice to their progeny, were heralded triumphantly by press and television, while Sir Peter Medawar and his colleagues' failure to reproduce Gorczynski and Steele's results was passed over in silence.

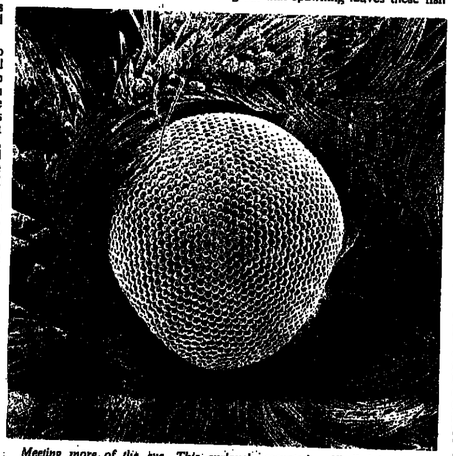
Such experiments are carried out not only by cranks and frauds. In the 1950s Sir Cyril Hinshelwood, Nobel Laureate, President of the Royal Society and Professor of Physical Chemistry at Oxford, published paper after paper on the nutritional adaptation of bacteria by the inheritance of acquired characters. No biologist believed them. His prejudices blinded him to the true meaning of his observations, which was clarified eventually by Jacob and Monod.

It is often said that Darwinism is no more than a working hypothesis, and has never been proved, but this is no longer true. At a recent meeting in Cambridge commemorating the hundredth anniversary of Darwin's death, Manfred Eigen, the great German physical chemist, demonstrated a system of nucleic acid and protein that evolves in the test tube by random mutation and natural selection in accordance with mathematical laws that are as rigorous as Newton's laws of gravitation. Patricia Clarke from University College London told us how bacteria "learn" to feed on even the most exotic compounds synthesized by organic chemists, and proved that it all happens by random mutation and natural selection.

This same process has even given rise to a new, disease-resistant variety of man. In parts of West Africa, most children used to be killed by malaria. The only survivors were those who had become resistant to it. This resistance is not inherited. Once a child was born with a chance mutation in one of his haemoglobin genes. The offspring of that child who had inherited the mutant gene proved more resistant to malaria than the ones who had not, and more of them survived to reproductive age. This selection repeated itself generation after generation. The carriers of the mutant gene might eventually have replaced all the non-carriers, but in fact they had to pay a price for their advantage. When two carriers married, half of their children on the average had the good luck to be carriers; but one quarter were afflicted by sickle cell anaemia, a severe blood disease that killed them before they grew up. Their deaths partly balanced the greater fitness of the carriers, with the result that over many generations an equilibrium between carriers and non-carriers established itself. Now many of the sickle cell carriers live in North and Central America, where their resistance to malaria is no longer an advantage and the anaemia of many of their children poses a grave health problem. Sickle cell anaemia is a case of Darwinian evolution in man that happened in comparatively recent times. It also illustrates Darwin's recognition that natural selection works relative to a specific environment.

We know that evolution happened and we know how much time it took, but we have little idea of how it worked. Were primitive forms of life made of primitive molecules which evolution then perfected to build more complex forms? Molecular biologists have discovered that, on the contrary, the same kinds of protein molecules are used for similar chemical functions by all organisms which are alive today. "What holds for a coli bacterium is true for an elephant" was one of Monod's slogans. The protein molecules of even the most primitive organisms are unbelievably complex; they are made up of thousands of atoms woven into precisely ordered three-dimensional fabrics. I cannot describe them by analogy to any familiar image because nothing like them exists in the macroscopic world. How did they arise? Jacob, a colleague of today's molecular biologists, is the Renaissance anatomists who first dissected the human body and described its intricate organs. To rationalize the structures revealed by the scalpel, sixteenth-century anatomists had to invoke God's will. To rationalize the structures revealed by X-ray analysis of proteins, twentieth-century biologists have to invoke natural selection." In both instances we are faced by the end-products of 3,000 million years of evolution and cannot guess its beginnings.

In fact, we can hardly expect to understand how, for instance, a wing evolved from a leg in the past, because we have no idea how the genes in a chicken embryo's chromosomes determine the growth of its wings today. Genetic information is laid down in a linear script. Since it is one-dimensional, we don't know how it specifies structures in three dimension,



Meeting more of the eye. This curiously created golfball lying in a Rousseau-esque rough, one of the many startling photographs in The Grand Design: Form and Colour in Animals *by Sally Foy and Oxford Scientific Films (238pp. Dent. £12.50. 0 460 04571 7), is in fact the eye of a diamondback moth magnified about 250 times through an electron microscope. The hexagonal shapes are ommatidia, tiny tube-like visual units which form the compound eyes of certain insects. Generally, the more ommatidia an insect has the better its vision, but scientists are uncertain what it sees – probably just a kaleidoscope of light, colour and shade.*

on either the molecular or the macroscopic scale. Nevertheless, Jacob argues that the unity of life at the molecular level conveys at least one important message. If the molecules that make up a chimpanzee are practically identical to those that make a man, then the difference between the two species must lie in the way these molecules are organized. Nature acts like a child with Lego set who uses the same components to build a helicopter, a crane or a carousel. Nature builds variety from standard components, but it generates new variety without a plan, by random trial. If the new assembly fails, Nature discards it. If it works, Nature allows it to propagate. Jacob compares this process to tinkering (*bricolage*), making new gadgets from old bits and pieces that happen to be around, like the recent development of an ultra-light aircraft from a hang-glider and a go-cart motor. Modern gene analysis suggests that not only new organisms but new kinds of protein molecules may have come into being in this way: bits and pieces from existing genes happening to have coalesced to become the blueprint for a protein with a new chemical function.

We do not know how the development of an organism is specified by its genes, and neither do we know how the genes determine when the organism ages and finally dies. Jacob relates the Greek myth of Eos, who begged Zeus to confer immortality on her lover Tithonos, but forgot to ask him also for eternal youth. Tithonos ages until he so exasperates his beloved with his shrill, senile chatter that she turns him into a cicada and puts him away in a box. From the point of view of natural selection, Tithonos is not immortal but merely has an inadequate protein, chosen from among 15,000 or so genes, that makes him too exhausted to survive. In mammals that have produced progeny, we merely see a pottering out, for lack of selective pressure, of the many mechanisms that had kept them fit to collect food and keep off predators. Jacob notes that ageing consists, not in the alteration of a single organ or molecular system but a general deterioration of the whole body. It is therefore not likely to be arrested by any miracle drug. "Like other scientific fantasies . . . the Fountain of Youth probably does not belong to the world of the possible."

Are mental effects different from physical ones? Jacob skims over the evolution of mind from chemotaxis in coli bacteria to perception in humans and argues that there has been continuous evolution of the brain from animals to man. Consequently he finds it hard to believe that these mental events in man should have become different in kind from those in animals. Does nature or nurture determine how we think? Jacob is certain that our genetic make-up determines the anatomy of our brain, even if we don't understand how this is laid down in the genetic programme, but he suggests that our capacity to use our brain is influenced by the stimuli of our environment. It is neither the blank tape favoured by egalitarian Marxists nor the gramophone record invoked by socio-biologists. He quotes the retarded mental development of emotionally deprived children as evidence that an individual's intellectual performance does not reflect directly his genetic inheritance, but he fails to mention nutritional deprivation in early childhood as another cause of mental deficiency. [illegible] and of the tragedies of our [illegible] inadequate protein [illegible] children's brains remain stunted whatever their genetic inheritance. Medicine's success in reducing infant mortality has not been matched by our ability to secure nutritious food for the millions of babies that survive. Their deprivation in infancy is setting up a vicious circle because it robs them of the parents' ability to better their own lot and that of their children in the future.

Jacob wonders if the human brain needs to have a coherent and unified representation of the world such as myths have provided from time immemorial. He suggests that the Judeo-Christian myths have paved the way for science by their doctrine of an orderly universe created by a God who stands outside Nature and controls it through laws accessible to man. No doubt this Christians were taught that Jesus and many of the saints performed miracles that broke the very laws that the scientists were to discover. Since the concept of natural laws originated from the Greeks. Jacob laments that the scientists' objective world, unlike the myths which it superseded, is devoid of mind and soul, of joy and sadness, of desire and hope. Science has robbed some of us of a heavenly father who gave direction and meaning to our lives, but it gives great joy to those that practise it, because the subtlety and beauty of the real world that science has unravelled is greater than that conjured up by even the most imaginative of Greek and Hebrew myths.

Jacob asks if it is possible for society to define a set of values directly, without resorting to myths which man himself has created and set over his destiny. Being aware of the philosophical tenet that values cannot be derived from facts, he leaves the question unanswered. I believe that from the Renaissance onwards science has led man to adopt a set of values quite different from some of Christ's teaching, or at least from the early interpretation of his teaching, in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus said: "Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather in the barns; and your heavenly father feedeth them. . . . Be not therefore anxious, saying, what shall we eat? What shall we drink? Wherewithal shall we be clothed? . . . But seek you his kingdom, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Christians throughout the Dark and Middle Ages seem to have interpreted this injunction, and others, to mean that man should not strive to better his lot in this world, but prepare himself for the next. Science has reversed these values by convincing man that it lies in its power to improve the conditions of his own life and that of his fellow men in this world. Edison and Pasteur were the heroes of my boyhood, rather than saints and martyrs.

Jacob ends his book with an appeal for reason. "The enlightenment of the 19th century had the folly to consider reason to be not only necessary but sufficient for the solution of all problems. Today it would be still more foolish to decide, as some would like, that because reason is not sufficient, it is not necessary either."

Antarctic Wildlife, with photographs by Eric Hosking, a foreword by Keith Shackleton, and accompanying text by Bryan Sage, has just been published (160pp, with 146 photographs, 116 in colour, Croom Helm. £12.95. 0 7099 1215 3). The book is a record of two voyages to the Antarctic. The first was to the Northern Peninsular, "that arm that sticks out from the main land mass like an inverted comma"; the second, leaving from the port of Ushuaia in Tierra del Fuego, was a circumnavigation of the Antarctic. The main text is divided into eight sections: "The Historical Background", "The Antarctic and its Ecology", "The Antarctic Continent", "The Maritime Continent", "The Subantarctic", "Penguins" (including the Emperor, the King, the Adelie, the Gentoo, the Chinstrap, the Macaroni and the Rockhopper), "Albatrosses" (Black-browed, Grey-headed, Yellow-nosed, Sooty and Wandering), "Other Birds" and Seals". The photographs, chosen from among 15,000 are of

Sunset over the statute-book

J. R. Pole

GUIDO CALABRESI

A Common Law for the Age of Statutes

319pp. Harvard University Press. £17.50.
0 674 14604 2

What should be done about middle-aged laws? They no longer serve a useful social purpose, but they have enough life in them to cause trouble; and for not very reputable political reasons, they are often difficult to repeal. The problem is causing not merely congestion, but a congestion of anomalies. "Legal obsolescence", in Guido Calabresi's phrase, has called forth a variety of remedies, most of which he finds unsatisfactory or even dangerous.

Legal obsolescence is defined by two principal characteristics. First, the law doesn't "fit". It is visibly out of phase with what Calabresi, who is fond of topographical imagery, calls "the legal landscape" (sometimes "the legal topography"). Secondly, it lacks legislative support, in the sense that if it were not on the statute book, the existing legislature would not enact it. Its authority rests on its once having commanded a legislative majority, presumed to have reflected a public majority. The problem has become acute because of the tide of statute law which has overtaken the former American reliance on common law jurisprudence. For this process, Calabresi inflicts on us the word "statutorification", which itself should be considered part of the punishment.

This form of anomaly is not confined to American jurisprudence. In Britain, whenever someone is prosecuted under the blasphemy laws the question is asked as to whether these laws make sense – whether they "fit" – in our present-day world of secular ideas and sociological explanations. The incongruity is all the more acute because the laws protect only the Christian religion in a multi-religious society. It seems unlikely that any present parliament would adopt the blasphemy laws in their present form – perhaps in any form. But present parliaments do not seem in a hurry to repeal them. The mere existence of a law constitutes an inertial force in favour of its survival, especially when the questions involved are subject to special sensitivities or to the pressure of organized interests.

Calabresi's theme emerges in the answer to two central questions: should old *statutes* have greater survival value than old common law rules? And if not, who should decide? "My own conclusion", he says, "is that there is nothing in democratic or majoritarian theory which supports the notion that old statutes, as a group, are more entitled to a conservative bias than old common law rules, or that courts are less suited than legislatures (at least checked and balanced ones) to question the appropriateness of that bias in a particular rule or statute." The problem has special weight in the United States, where the separation of powers has confided to the courts a considerable – and perhaps an increasing – opportunity to make policy through the interpretation of statutes.

Calabresi is plainly concerned about the underlying question of legitimacy in a democracy. The whole moral authority of a statute is based on its command – or its former command – of a legislative majority which is presumed to represent an electoral majority. But there is a paradox here. For American legislation is peculiarly liable to be based on coalitions, favours and log-rolling that have only the remotest connection with majority opinion, and this character of the American legislative process makes it particularly difficult to put together a coalition to repeal a law which affects the public but does not touch many private interests. Ultimately, the system does depend on some form of majoritarian theory, even if in practice it is largely myth. Calabresi therefore recognizes a need to extend the attenuated form of majoritarianism to the courts. One way of doing this is to argue that juries constitute a sort of opinion poll of majority views (a subtly Tocquevillian argument!). Another is that a large number of judges sitting in different courts have somewhat the same function. (And it doesn't matter all that much if one of them occasionally "guesses" wrong.)

The main force of the argument, however, is based on the superior qualifications of judges. It is they who are most highly trained to survey the legal landscape, to notice significant connections and to identify prevalent or oncoming trends and therefore to judge any particular law to be obsolescent in the light of a general movement of law and opinion.

Judicial policy is not the only possible solution, and Calabresi reviews others, each of which he finds unsatisfactory. The first and least effective is Bickel's recommendation of "the passive virtues" – meaning inaction by the courts in order to indicate the need for legislative action (which does not always follow). This is akin to "temporary nullification" suggested by both Bickel and Wellington, by which the court can send a statute back to the legislature for a "second look" without actually declaring it unconstitutional. The frequently applied remedy of judicial interpretation is liable to involve the court in much dubious reading of legislative intent and in tendentious argument, and has the additional disadvantage that the court may nullify as unconstitutional a law which only needs amendment or which in fact does prove to command continued support.

All these methods are intended to promote some sort of colloquy between courts and legislatures, but much can go wrong in the mutual attribution of intentions. A rather popular legislative device is the enactment of "sunset laws". These contain a built-in provision for their own termination, but there are difficulties here too. Laws age at different rates, and part of the problem arises from the initial fact that legislators cannot easily foresee the ageing process. Legislative committees set up to review such laws may easily become committees for their automatic re-enactment and are subject to the hazards of legislative politics. European countries have established separate supreme courts to review legislation; Calabresi is convinced that the American system will channel all such issues towards the Supreme Court. "Judgmental sunsetting" (another of his heartless linguistic inventions) will not work any better if entrusted to special law-reform commissions; they have in the past confined themselves to technical rather than policy questions and would probably do so in the future.

According to Calabresi, "Most laws create their own landscapes or become increasingly out of place." And the courts are by training and character the best judges of what is "in place". A good example of his preferred procedure occurred in *Griswold v Connecticut* (1965) in which the Supreme Court of the United States declared Connecticut's archaic anti-contraception law unconstitutional. The law was flagrantly disobeyed throughout the state but no legislature dared repeal it. The Supreme Court rescued the people of Connecticut from crime and the legislature from cowardice by finding that the law violated individual rights which had already been established; under the penumbra of the Constitution, the wretched law withered away. On the other hand, in *Furman v Georgia* (1972) Calabresi's thesis faces a severe test – which it perhaps narrowly survives. The Supreme Court, voting 5-4, held the death penalty unconstitutional; held that it "had become" unconstitutional would be nearer the mark, in the light of changing public opinion. It was "cruel and unusual", partly because of its increasing rarity, partly because of its extreme character. According to Mr Justice Marshall, it was "unacceptable to the people of the United States". The majority hoped to have killed capital punishment, only to find state legislatures bounding back with a spate of new laws, drafted so far as possible to meet the Court's objections (which referred in part to the inequality of the incidence of the penalty).

In subsequently upholding several of these laws the Court accepted the fact of re-enactment as *evidence* of their continued constitutionality. In effect the Court was obliged to admit that it had misread the legal landscape. But here Calabresi's humane preferences speak louder than his legal judgment, and he blames the Court for taking at face value at least one of these legislative re-enactments. Apparently he feels that the Court should have looked *behind* Connecticut's House vote to discern the psychology of legislative intent, and should have continued to hold the view that the death penalty was contrary to the drift of opinion. One effect of this would be to deprive legislatures of responsibility for their own votes – a state of affairs which tends to be induced by judicial review, and has done much to bring about the present impasse.

At heart, Calabresi thinks more highly of judges than of legislators – especially state legislators. This amounts to rather more than is admitted by his view that lawyers are best suited to map the legal landscape. His theory is based on the assumption that law is in a constant state of drift, moving in essentially the same direction as the drift of public opinion (drift being perhaps preferable to "landscape", which is normally thought of as static). When he speaks of laws as creating their own landscape he could be taken to refer to their effects on the interpretation of other laws. He has not assigned himself the task of explaining how changes do come about in public opinion; and he thus only indirectly implies recognition of a factor in the formation of public opinion of which lawyers and law professors are not generally unaware – and that is the influence of law itself. In such a heterogeneous country as the United States, where the Constitution is one of the great unifiers of sentiment, the influence of law on opinion may be considered particularly significant. Throughout the long campaign for civil rights legislation one of the most cogent arguments was precisely that law could and would exert a progressive influence on opinion; and no one can reasonably doubt that, in the long run, *Brown v Board of Education* and related cases did have that effect. In conferring on the judges the power to write off obsolete statutes, Calabresi is confiding to them the responsibility not only for deciding whether a particular law "fits the legal landscape", but whether its gravitational pull will be beneficial in creating a new landscape, and that question must also turn on whether in their opinion that new landscape will be an improvement on the existing one.

There are obvious objections in principle to Professor Calabresi's views and we can be sure that they will get a good airing when this book is reviewed in the American law journals. But he is dealing with the situation that exists, not the one that might have been differently tackled sixty or so years ago. Those who are not convinced will have to do some hard thinking to construct a better method. But his case rests heavily on the superior quality of the judiciary, which may be an existing condition but is hardly a necessary condition of American public life. It is the judiciary who "charge" as their unelected representatives of the future with the responsibility of getting it right. It is a role in which they will at times be hard to distinguish from guardians.

The papers presented at the 50th anniversary of the Social Science Research Building, the University of Chicago, in December 1979 have now been edited by William H. Kruskel and published under the title of *The Social Sciences: Their Nature and Uses* (166pp. University of Chicago Press. £8.40. 0 226 45499 1). The eleven contributors include Marshall Sahlins on "Individual Experience and Cultural Order", Herbert A. Simon on "Are Social Problems Problems That Social Science Can Solve?", Lee J. Cronbach on "Prudent Aspirations for Social Inquiry", James S. Coleman on "Policy Research and Political Theory" and Theodore W. Schultz on "Distortions of Economic Research".

SOME SEPTEMBER TITLES

P. G. WODEHOUSE
The Authorised Biography
Frances Donaldson
A wonderfully researched biography which tells you all you need to know about Plum – *The Times* £10.95

THE NOEL COWARD DIARIES
Edited by Graham Payn and Sheridan Morley
'Compulsive reading matter' – *The Times*
'Hugely enjoyable' – *Guardian* £15.00

ATTLEE
Kenneth Harris
'Thoroughly researched, well-informed, learned – *Literary Review* £14.95

PHILOSOPHY IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY
A. J. Ayer
Conceived as a sequel to Bertrand Russell's *A History of Western Philosophy*, this clearly and economically written book will stand as a landmark in a complex area of modern thought. £12.50

NOTES OF A REVOLUTIONARY
Andrei Amalrik
A moving personal memoir by one of the leading Soviet dissidents, as well as a fascinating cultural account of Russia from 1965 to 1976. £12.50

FOE INTO FRIEND
The Makers of the New Germany from Konrad Adenauer to Helmut Schmidt
Marion Dönhoff
One of Germany's leading political journalists explains her post-war country through portraits of those leaders she knew intimately: Adenauer, Brandt, Schmidt and Strauss. £10.95

A HALF OF TWO LIVES
Alison Waley
'Must be read for its creation of passion and tenderness, for its humour . . . for its sheer incredibleness' – *Daily Telegraph* £10.95

VICTORIA DE LOS ANGELES
Peter Roberts
The first authorized biography of the international opera singer tells the rags-to-riches story of one of our most popular classical performers. £8.95

MY MAD WORLD OF OPERA
Harold Rosenthal
'A modest, factual and affably written chronicle of Britain's thriving operatic life during the past 30 years' – *Observer* £10.95

ILLUSTRATED
DAVID GENTLEMAN'S BRITAIN
David Gentleman
The best aid to sightseeing in its deepest sense that has appeared for years – *Sunday Times* £12.50

ENGLISH COTTAGES
Tony Evans and Candida Lycett Green
Introduction by Sir John Betjeman
A lively text and 128 specially commissioned photographs show the range of English cottage architecture, from practicality to beauty, fantasy and wit. £9.95

FICTION
DUTCH SHEA, JR
John Gregory Dunne
'Sharply honed characters, gritty, realistic dialogue, savage, coruscating humour and an ingeniously constructed plot . . . compulsive reading' – *Publishers Weekly* £7.50

MAIDEN RITES
Sonia Pilcer
A witty and intelligent novel about first love in the sixties by the author of *Teen Angel*, for which she was hailed as 'woman's answer to Martin Amis'. £7.95

ALL ON SALE NOW
Weidenfeld & Nicolson

The verbal fall-out

C. M. Woodhouse

JOZEF GOLDBLAT

Agreements for Arms Control: A Critical Survey

387pp. Taylor and Francis. £18.50. 0 85066 229 X

FRANK BLACKABY (Editor)

World Armaments and Disarmament: SIPRI Yearbook 1982

517p. Taylor and Francis. £22.50. 0 805066 230 3

The Arms Race and Arms Control

242pp. Taylor and Francis. £3.95. 0 85066 232 X

E. P. THOMPSON

Zero Option

198pp. Merlin Press. £10 (paperback. £3.60). 0 85036 287 3

MICHAEL CLARK and MARJORIE MOWLAM (Editors)

Debate on Disarmament

143pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £3.95. 0 7100 9269 5

E. P. THOMPSON and others

Exterminism and Cold War

350pp. Verso/NLB. £16.50 (paperback £5.50). 0 86091 051 2

MARY KALDOR and DAN SMITH (Editors)

Disarming Europe

196pp. Merlin Press. £10 (paperback, £3.60). 0 85036 277 6

LEWIS A. DUNN

Controlling the Bomb: Nuclear Proliferation in the 1980s

209pp. Yale University Press. £14.95 (paperback, £4.95). 0 300 02820 2

These eight books proliferate so many facts, ideas and arguments about defence and disarmament that it is hard to see the wood for the trees. They can best be considered in three groups: the first consisting entirely or mainly of factual data with little propaganda; the second concerned with the case for nuclear and general disarmament as the only escape from the threat of war; the third examining the possibility of controlling nuclear weapons if they cannot be abolished. Most of the works in the first two categories were timed in preparation for the United Nations' special session on disarmament, which recently ended.

In the first group are three publications of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). Jozef Goldblat's *Agreements for Arms Control* covers a wide range of international treaties from 1868 to 1981, giving the texts, lists of signatories, and supporting data on verification and enforcement, breaches and claims, sanctions and future prospects. It is a "critical survey" only in the historian's sense, not in the sense of passing judgment on the well-meant efforts of the international community.

World Armaments and Disarmament is the SIPRI Yearbook for 1981. It examines with a rather more deliberately judicial eye, the balance of forces, the agreements and intentions of the powers as known or presumed at the end of last year. A more popular digest of the same material is included in *The Arms Race and Arms Control*, also compiled by SIPRI, in some cases – for example, the chapter on Strategic Nuclear Weapons – it reproduces the contents of the Yearbook in identical form. Where these two works exercise criticism, it is usually at the expense of the United States and Nato rather than of the Soviet Union, presumably because information on the latter is so much less accessible.

The second group of books is dominated by the personality of E. P. Thompson, who contributes to all but one of them. *Zero Option* is a collection of his articles, reviews and lectures, mostly written in 1980–81, but including also an up-to-date piece on the Falklands crisis, written before the main battle had begun. His title is taken from President Reagan's plan for a bilateral reduction of nuclear forces. It is characteristic of Thompson's legendary status in the controversy over nuclear defence that while he immediately welcomed the Reagan plan – with the words "Yes, but more!" – he was equally immediately accused of opposing it and trying to sabotage it.

He has written so much that there is really no excuse for misunderstanding him, though his strident tone and impatience with disagreement do not make it easy to conduct a reasoned argument with him. A striking example in *Zero Option* is his method of starting a debate with Professor Laurence Martin ("Courtier at Toad Hall") and with the Prime Minister ("The War of Thatcher's Face"), which is quite simply to insult them. There is consequently a danger that readers will miss his best points, which are logical rather than ill-tempered. Most of them are to be found in his "Notes on Exterminism" (meaning civilization's death-wish) and in the draft text of his Dimbleby lecture, "Beyond the Cold War", which was vetoed by the BBC and is here published as delivered elsewhere on another occasion.

The most persistent of Thompson's ideas is that the impetus for disarmament can only come from below, generated by popular feeling, not from above, generated by state policy. His belief that this is true in the Soviet bloc as well as in the Western world, though not widely shared, is forcibly argued. It was challenged by a Czech dissident, who wrote Thompson a letter arguing that the Soviet system cannot be equated for this purpose with Western democracy. Thompson publishes his letter, together with his own well-argued reply. Clearly he dislikes and distrusts the Kremlin bureaucracy just as much as the "military-industrial complex" of the United States. But unavoidably he will strengthen the propagandist case for the former against the latter by his repeated contention that the latest crisis in the Cold War was initiated not by any Soviet policy but by the decision of Nato, in December 1979 to modernize its Continental nuclear weaponry.

Thompson reappears in *Debate on Disarmament*, with his attack on Professor Martin repeated almost word for word under a slightly less disagreeable title. The book is not strictly speaking a debate but an argument for the desirability of a debate. The participants are all on the same side of the fence, with minor variations: Michael Clark and Marjorie Mowlam, the joint editors, describe the growth of the anti-nuclear movement. Mary Kaldor argues that the Soviet threat is imaginary. Professor Gultung proposes that the European states should "de-couple" themselves from the super-powers. Professor Pentz believes that scientists must help to mobilize popular opinion to press for unilateral, as a preliminary to multilateral, nuclear disarmament. The Revd John Robinson argues similarly from the Church's point of view. Only Jonathan Dimbleby takes a detached stance, arguing that the media should do more to promote debate on both sides, but his heart, too, is in the right place. All the contributors emphasize that they are no more anti-American than anti-Soviet; they are just anti-nuclear and anti-war.

Exterminism and Cold War is more like an actual debate, though only between committed socialists. The theme is stated again by Thompson in his essay on "exterminism" reproduced from *Zero Option*. A number of fellow-socialists discuss and criticize it, some of them quite vigorously. An important feature of the ensuing debate is the participation of foreign contributors – German, Italian, French, American, Japanese and even Soviet. At the end Thompson contributes a thoughtful and conciliatory reply to the debate. He recognizes the validity of one or two criticisms, particularly those of Mike Davis, a former student activist. He also seems a little disconcerted by the attitude of the Soviet dissidents, the Medvedev brothers, who turn out to be as much patriots as dissidents.

Clearly the Achilles' heel of Thompson's campaign for a popular movement against nuclear weapons lies east of the Iron Curtain. He has successfully revitalized the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament with a European dimension, but it is a success virtually confined to western Europe (and the United States). The difficulty of mobilizing any effective movement in the eastern "people's democracies", already illustrated by Czech and Soviet responses, is confirmed in *Disarming Europe*. This is the product of a conference held in Amsterdam last year. The aim was to press for a nuclear-free zone "from Poland to Portugal". The largest group of contributors was British, but others came from Norway, West Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, the United States and even Hungary. One naturally looks with interest at the Hungarian contribution, but one is not surprised to find that it is simply a statement of the party line. As the editors, Mary Kaldor and Dan Smith, modestly and realistically admit, although the goal is very simple, the process of reaching it is very complex.

This conclusion leads naturally to the third group of books in the list which has only one member. Since Lewis A. Dunn is a Special Assistant for Nuclear Affairs in the US Department of State, he will not be expected to share Thompson's far-reaching vision. In *Controlling the Bomb*, he argues that further proliferation of nuclear weapons is practically unavoidable, especially since India exploded a nuclear device in 1974. About a dozen countries are now capable of joining the five powers already known to possess nuclear weapons, and one or two others already suspected of doing so. Some of the dozen potential nuclear powers are also sufficiently advanced in industrial technology to have no difficulty over means of delivery. Others, less advanced, would have difficulty in attacking anyone but their next-door neighbours; but that is the most dangerous problem, apart from the still more frightful nightmare of terrorists acquiring nuclear weapons.

Dunn believes that it will be impossible to stop many such countries from developing a nuclear capability. Nor does he believe that they would refrain from doing so even if the major powers set them the example of nuclear disarmament. Therefore the only practical policy is to try to slow down and limit the inevitable course of proliferation. This is not a wholly pessimistic view, for those countries which have mastered the technology of nuclear weapons and delivery systems have found the process extremely sobering as well as extremely expensive.

The one encouraging fact in the less dismal generation has been that although there have been many conventional wars, there has been none in which two nuclear powers have confronted each other. Clearly the nuclear powers are tacitly but firmly determined not to be drawn into such a confrontation by their lesser associates. Implicit in Dunn's book is the question whether that minimal degree of hope for the future would be enhanced or diminished by the "abolition" of nuclear weapons, as recommended by most of the writers in the second group. The word "abolition" has to be put in inverted commas because the technology underlying the weapons cannot be abolished. The risk of a major conventional war would still remain, and so would the risk that nuclear weapons would then be "re-invented" and used. None of the supporters of nuclear disarmament seems to have considered the consequences of then putting the clock back to 1939.

Indicting the intelligentsia

Michael Howard

NORMAN PODHORETZ

Why We Were in Vietnam

240pp. New York: Simon and Schuster. £13.50. 0 671 44578 2

"Nobody", said the immortal W. C. Fields, "who hates small children and dogs can be all bad." By the same token, nobody who has been so consistently unpopular with the American intelligentsia as Norman Podhoretz can be always wrong. When he is wrong he can be terrible. His pamphlet "The Present Danger", a hysterical paean on the subject The Russians Are Coming, had an evil impact on American policy and opinion that it may take years to eradicate. But the pessimistic intellectuals of the Right often have a bleak wisdom denied to their more sanguine colleagues of the Centre and Left. We need only recall the sombre jeremiads in this country by Leo Maxse before the First World War and F. A. Voigt before the Second. Neither was a figure with whom at the time any respectable liberal would have any truck. Now we can see how events proved them right.

Podhoretz on Vietnam is bound to be interesting and, like everything that he writes, uncomfortable. He has no sympathy for the liberal elitists, "the best and the brightest", who took the United States into Vietnam on an idealistic mission based on a total misreading of the international situation. He is scathing about the way in which the war was conducted. But his full scorn is reserved for the opponents of the war, who allowed their opposition to American policy gradually to merge into sympathy with communism in general, approval of the North Vietnam régime in particular, hatred of their own country and a witch-hunt of all involved in its policies. This last he stigmatizes with good reason as "reverse McCarthyism". It might also be called reverse jingoism. The American intelligentsia reacted to the Vietnam involvement by abandoning balanced judgment as totally as did so many British and nearly all German intellectuals in the early years of the First World War. The ladies among them, Mary McCarthy and Susan Sontag in particular, dished out white feathers with the enthusiasm of London dowagers in the winter of 1914. Journalists slanted and suppressed facts inconvenient to the simplistic picture they had decided to present. Lawyers and philosophers constituted themselves into tribunals to try the atrocious crimes of the enemy, rejecting all defence as "legalistic quibbling". The only difference was that this time the enemy was their own government and those who served it. It was the other side whose cause was absolutely just.

For Podhoretz, the whole Vietnam phenomenon was a civil war among the liberals he despises; the liberal establishment which involved the United States in Vietnam in an attempt to check the communist advance, the liberal intelligentsia whose alienation was so great that ultimately they wanted nothing better than to see their own country acknowledging humiliating defeat. But the worst of his scorn he reserves for the hand-wringers in between, the Michael Walzers, the Irving Howes, who cried a plague on both houses, declared loftily that the situation was too complex for the simple solutions offered, and condemned everyone all round without themselves having the faintest idea what to do.

Podhoretz himself, it must be said, is longer on analysis than he is on prescription. Like the trishman in the story, if he wanted to get to Limerick he would not start from here. He denounces – and perhaps renounces – as unrealistic, the "domino theory" that provided the basic rationale for American intervention, based as it was on ignorance of the region and misreading of Chinese policy. He insists, however, that it was idealistic anti-Communism, not "imperialism" in any recognizable sense of the word, which motivated that involvement. But both Kennedy and Johnson, he maintains, wanted to check the Communist advance, "on the cheap", without calling upon the people of the United States for any sustained effort. Kennedy thought it could be done by military advisers and Green Berets. Johnson thought it could be done by bombing. Both saw it as an executive activity in which their volatile people should not become too deeply involved. When they did become involved, imperceptibly and incrementally, Johnson still did not try to mobilize opinion in support of the war by arousing latent American idealism. This he believed, and with good reason, would produce only overkill. So half a million American troops found themselves in Vietnam, without themselves or their families having more than the vaguest idea why they were there.

Once they were there, however, they deployed force on the massive and insensitive scale that was to horrify the world and provide so much ammunition for the opposition at home and abroad. Podhoretz condemns the military doctrines that led to this, the reliance on technology rather than military expertise, as well as the ignorance and contempt shown by the American forces for the people on whose behalf they were allegedly fighting. But he excuses the destructiveness of the war on the grounds that the techniques adopted were intended to save American lives. The argument is not convincing either morally or strategically. Morally there can never be a case for saving the lives of one's own troops at the expense of innocent civilians. Militarily victory is gained in an ideological conflict only if one obtains the gratitude and confidence of those for whom one is fighting. Even if the Americans were winning the war militarily – which they were not – they never began to win it politically. Given their fundamental ignorance of the country, how could it be expected that they would?

Although Podhoretz is deservedly harsh on the radical opposition, with all its hysteria and intellectual dishonesty, one must appreciate the predicament of the American intelligentsia. A war was being fought in their name, in a cause that they regarded as specious and by methods that appalled them. It was being fought, not by a professional imperial gendarmerie, but by their own children and pupils and friends. Modernist-phrased remonstrations got them nowhere: the Administration simply "hunkered down". The elaborate manoeuvres by which Henry Kissinger tried to extricate the United States from its predicament without humiliation and without too great a betrayal of its allies seemed only to make matters worse. In pursuit of this protests the intellectuals often believed shamefully, saying and doing things which they now, one hopes, regret.

But were they wrong to protest? The successor régime in Saigon, not to mention Cambodia, is appallingly worse than those of Diem and Thieu, which American liberals found so abominable; as anyone less blindly fanatical than a Noam Chomsky is forced to recognize. Yet given all that does anyone, Mr Podhoretz included, believe that American forces should still be fighting to save Vietnam for democracy?

A selection of the writings of Judah L. Magnes, the noted American Zionist and one-time Chancellor of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, has recently been published under the title *Dissenter in Zion* (554pp. Harvard University Press. £21. 0 674 21283 5). The editor, Arthur A. Goren, has assembled his material chronologically in seven sections, beginning with the period 1900–1914, which he entitles "Rebel Rabbi", and ending with "War and the Politics of Dissent, 1940–1947" and "A Mission of Peace, 1948".

Disaffected and disfigured

Patricia Craig

FAY WELDON

The President's Child

220pp. Hodder and Stoughton. £6.95. 0 340 24564 6

Fay Weldon's latest novel (her eighth) contains, as usual, many warnings about the dangers of life as a female; you are invited to cultivate a proper scepticism in the face of apparent goodness, or thoughtfulness; to remain on the alert for emotional pitfalls; not to take anything on trust. The more satisfactory a marriage appears from the outside, for example, the more you are advised to observe it with suspicion. To dramatize this point, Fay Weldon places one such marriage at the centre of her plot, and proceeds to lay bare its defective foundations. By the end of the book, you see the whole thing for what it is: a fabrication.

The novel opens in a refurbished street in Camden Town – "an island of privilege in an underprivileged city sea". Here blind Maia, whose disability is more a symptom of psychological disorder than anything else, entertains her friends, "the assembled ladies of Wincaster Row", with a story about Isabel, their neighbour for six years, whose domestic arrangements illustrate the novelist's contention that falsity can grow to look very like felicity. "She had it all made", they cry – without envy, for envy is an emotion not greatly indulged in Wincaster Row – thinking of Isabel's conscientious husband, lively son, and agreeable occupation as presenter of a late-night television show. What can be missing from a life such as this? It is the task of Maia, Isabel's confidant, to enlighten them. The story is set out, piece by piece, interspersed with Maia's reflections on her own trouble, and on the lot of women.

Down Among the Women is an early Weldon title that does well enough to indicate the author's standpoint – sardonic and disabused – on female disaffection, a topic that still engages her closest concern. She displays an almost obsessive interest in what can happen to a woman as a consequence of her gender, using her peripheral characters to examine various possibilities, as their lives are evoked in a string of picturesque details that add up to striking, representative or entertaining histories. This method, applied with greater thoroughness, does for her heroines too. (In the highly successful *Praxis* it was expanded to form the substance of an entire novel; at the other extreme, in the stories of *Watching Me, Watching You*, for example, it begins to bear a dangerous resemblance to note-making.) An Australian childhood, plentiful in toughening ingredients, is manufactured for Isabel in *The President's Child*. An absent father, a mother insufficiently dedicated to her child's well-being, a landscape composed of yellow mud all foster in the girl a determination to make her way in the world. In Isabel's experience, men and horses are agents of destruction; brutes, rapists, as likely as not to kick you in the teeth – and then, when your jaw has set, to do it again. The horse responsible for the imperfection of the lower half of Isabel's face (an endearing disfigurement, we are given to understand) is called Secker, after the London publishing firm.

This piece of whimsy is typical of the rather dogged coyness that keeps getting into the author's tone – not altogether to its disadvantage, since by and large it cuts out sententiousness and wordiness. Fay Weldon is among the least tedious of writers; her comments on social inequalities, for example, are delivered in brisk little asides ("Man is as polite and kind to woman as he can afford to be, and not one whit the more"; "The old, like forsaken females, are expected to put up with second best, as a payment for misfortune", and so on) which – whether you take them on trust or not – approximate quite closely to the piquancy of the maxim. It's a style of writing that calls for a measure of waywardness as well as precision.

In *Puffball*, Fay Weldon's enticing last novel (country lore, malice, threats and gynaecological detail beautifully conjoined), a story of domestic relations acquired the quality of a ruthless fairy tale (following on from the more highly decorated, less successful *Little Sisters*): "Kate Crackernuts" is the one that comes to mind. *The President's Child* also borrows one of its strands from a genre more obviously colourful than the plain account of social experiences: the political thriller. Isabel's son Jason is not, as it happens, her husband's child, but the result of an idyllic erotic sojourn in a Washington hotel. The man concerned, whose name is Dandy Ivel (evil?), has since become a presidential candidate. Towards the end of the book, Isabel tells Maia the story of President Sukarno's mistress, wiped out expediently with her six-year-old son, to draw attention to the plight she fancies she herself is in. The novelist's point, of course, is to do with the dispensability of women and children whenever their interests and those of potentially powerful men do not coincide.

The thriller form doesn't, however, exactly make an appropriate match for Weldon's characteristically playful narrative mood: an approach altogether bleaker, or slicker, would have been needed to bring off, for example, the episodes concerning a couple of high-grade American assassins, organizers of the Ivel-for-President campaign. These decide to make it their business to see that Isabel is put in her place – whatever place, cave or grave, is allotted to her. In the course of discovering that traditional places of refuge have undergone a change as far as she is concerned, Isabel discovers that the duplicity of men is on a scale larger than anything envisaged by women. Feminism and high-class entertainment converge once more.

The President's Child is the story of an "accidental woman" – Isabel's term – who doesn't have the face she started out with, related by her neighbour who refuses to see. What are we to make of this? Fable, allegory, or figment of Maia's imagination? It's a tract for the times, at any rate, with confusion, delusion and conspiracy well to the fore. Fay Weldon has always been exceptionally conscious of the ephemeral (she keeps harping on particular moments in time – "It's 1972", "That was 1968"), of vogues in ideology and phraseology, under standing that social concern is as much a matter of fashion as anything else. Her own novels, *The President's Child* no less than the others, both reflect this truism and subject it to productive scrutiny.

Troubadour country

Alan Brownjohn

WILLIAM WATSON

The Knight on the Bridge

203pp. Chatto and Windus. £7.95. 0 7011 2635 3

The family motto of Caesar Grailly, the mad anti-hero of William Watson's new novel, is *Non phoenix sed corvus*: Not the phoenix, but the crow. Caesar ended a notable career of chivalric slaughter by accidentally killing his own eight-year-old son on the battlefield; and years later, has fetched up with his estranged wife, Bonne, their daughter, Flore, and a tiny, raggle-taggle garrison, in a bleak Pyrenean fastness away from the desperate wars of the plain, lord of nothing more than an unfinished castle in a mountain desert. The arrival in his hall of Amanieu, a sinister young adventurer, is the signal for the beginning of a weirdly eventful few days in which this silent and demented man rises from the ashes of his own destitution. Watson tells a tale that is as ornate and grand as the mythical bird on the family cap-badge, and as wily as the scavenging one.

This is troubadour country, but *The Knight on the Bridge* quickly abandons what seem to be some intimations that Caesar, who has long been stricken with inarticulateness, might find a creative voice with which to utter its "spiritual" intuitions. The real troubadour who comes to this uninviting castle demands cash down and payment on completion of his song, requires to study the mistress in the nude by candlelight to know what qualities she has to be praised – and then turns out to be gay. Throughout the novel there is an undercurrent of mockery running very deeply and quietly indeed – sometimes revealing itself in no more than the turn of a phrase or the wilful oddity of a coincidence – below the surface of Watson's decorated, archaic, ceremonious prose. The plot is so sure-footed and compellingly eerie that it would be easy to miss the satire; this Provence, its weather, food, and casually brutal atmosphere, seems quite genuine enough to be taken seriously.

Amanieu is suspected and disliked by the garrison, but attractive to Bonne, and to the thirteen-year-old Flore. The priest is repelled in his attempt to rape Bonne, and there follows a minor peasant uprising. Caesar almost fortuitously quells the rabble, but is unable to comprehend the forces unleashed in his stronghold by the presence of the young stranger. Amanieu, however, has to answer for his crimes when the overlord of the province arrives with the brother of a man whom he has murdered for his armour; and then Caesar contrives to meet the challenge in his place. There is something less than romantic and knightly about everyone's behaviour – "They say I'm hard to look at", the local crone cheerfully admits – but there is also something more than simply realistic, or iconoclastic, about Watson's mapping of this terrain of romantic love.

This is a novel in which the conventions of historical fiction are not abandoned, but intricately and ingeniously subverted. Caesar, Bonne, Flore and Amanieu inhabit a world of "gloomth and garlic" which is most accurately presented, and at the same time mocked. The meticulous descriptions of persons and inanimate objects (they can both be very malicious indeed) subtly suggest some much more solemn novelists. Physical action occurs with a heaviness which changes heroic deeds into pastiche. "That's your actual jousting pavilion", exclaims Caesar at one point, very nearly giving away Watson's joke. *The Knight on the Bridge* is a most unusual and skilful piece of sly humour; the quietly indeed – sometimes revealing smile is almost entirely concealed behind the helmets with which the author equips these coarse and bloody minded specimens of medieval mankind.

Leaving language behind

Thomas Sutcliffe

J. G. BALLARD

Myths of the Near Future

205pp. Cape. £6.95. 0 224 02936 3

Retrospection is obviously not a cardinal virtue for science-fiction writers, but few avoid it as conspicuously as J. G. Ballard. He writes as though he never looks back, with the concentration of a tunnel-visionary on what is about to be written. The vision itself is no longer a particularly singular one, although it was Ballard's early novel *The Drowned World* which did much to make it popular. Where Ballard does stand apart – and this creates the continuing interest of his work – is in allowing the psychic shocks of his imagined worlds to disturb his own prose. That prose is often marked by what seems to be an unconsciousness about its own effects and direction, as though it were the product of an obsessive mind rarely pausing to check how erratic its progress is.

There is evidence outside the novels that this is a fair account of how Ballard writes. When his publisher showed him the proofs of his novel *Crash* he claims to have surprised even himself. "My first reaction was that the man who wrote this book is mad." Like some of his other novels, *Crash* reads as art aspiring to the condition of pornography, not because the subject matter is clinically erotic – though it is – but because it shows an apparent monomania which, far from being stemmed by repetition, seeks it out. In pornography, after all, the whole point is to go back to the beginning and start again.

This new collection of stories proves that Ballard has not lost his nerve. There are still repetitions, and there is no sense that these recurrences are the formal elaborations of a theme. Attention is not drawn to them in that way. Ballard has abandoned that least realistic device of realism, the insistence on continual modification, the novelty of the novel, in order to show characters who are at the point of giving up the rationality of language in order to gain access to a new and anarchic physics.

There are repetitions in another sense. "Myths of the Near Future" and a companion story "News from the Sun" both explore a characteristic Ballard theme, the pathological effect of modern "advancement" on the modern psyche. They return quite clearly to earlier rhapsodies from the novels and make use of a familiar repertoire of effects, desolate bars and empty motels, deserted streets ceding to sand or jungle and littered with the relics of an over-extended technology which has instituted its own dereliction. But the fascination with what happens to language when it loses its foundation hasn't become stale. "So called articulate speech is an artefact of time" says one of Ballard's characters, about to embrace a babbling condition of timelessness. Ballard's prose hovers uneasily between the visionary and the ludicrous. His similes are like nothing on this constrained earth. "Around him the bright winds were like the open jaws of a crystal bird, the light flashing between its teeth." This kind of thing can easily go wrong: there is something coyly anthropomorphic in his description of "hills waiting with the infinite guile of the geological kingdom for the organic world to end and a more vivid mineral realm to begin", but in general the risks he takes to present the decay of time and space are worth taking.

Ballard is not much interested in emotions. His characters are like abandoned buildings themselves, with the sharp architecture of their rationality remaining after feeling has fled. They record the details of their own dissipation with a scientific accuracy, and they are all animated by the "remorseless logic of madness" which is attributed to the one character in the stories who is diagnosed as insane. They are at their most sympathetic when, like the reader, they are assailed by the sense that there is meaning locked in the dislocated world around them "like the forgotten codes of a discarded geometric language".

Other stories are less ambitious but rarely less effective. Ballard is still a master of aggressively polemical writing, sending despatches from the near future intended to turn our minds back. In "Theatre of War" he presents the shooting script for a *World in Action* documentary on an English civil war. The United States has intervened on a massive scale to bolster a corrupt British government and the economy is sagging under the weight of dollar scrip. Any doubts that the parallels with Vietnam are too laborious, that there is something too obvious about the device of bringing the war home to English readers, are silenced by the dead-pan acknowledgment, in a final footnote, to General Westmoreland. President Thieu and various US and ARVN troops for providing the chilling dialogue. In "Motel Architecture" and "Intensive Care Unit" he treats with deadly seriousness the old cliché about television killing the art of conversation. Here too language stands on the border between logic and the irrational.

In some senses these stories remain limited; they have specialized effects and specialized intentions. In some cases they are exhausted by one reading. But they never show the lifeless ingenuity of some science fiction, and their imaginative intelligence and readiness to take risks make it clear that in Ballard's case the term writer needs no additional qualification.

The Colors of Rhetoric

Problems in the Relation between Modern Literature and Painting

WENDY STEINER

There are very many interartistic metaphors that assert a special kinship between literature and painting and an ideal of sensory repleteness in art; in *Colors of Rhetoric* Wendy Steiner elevates the literature-painting analogy from a matter of fashion to a matter of philosophy, providing a theoretical context for the challenging interartistic studies now in progress. She traces the history of the analogy through the modern period and shows how structuralism, semiotics, post-structuralism, phenomenology, the new criticism, and modern art itself have all contributed to the current interest in these studies. *September 1982, £17.50.*

Bolognese Drawings in North American Collections, 1500–1800

MARY CAZORT and CATHERINE JOHNSON

The entries in this volume are amplified by an extensive and highly detailed examination of the intellectual, cultural, political, and economic contexts of Bolognese art of this period. Biographies of some 60 artists are included, with 140 black and white illustrations. *National Museums of Canada. £24.50.*

Architectural Theory and Practice from Alberti to Ledoux

DORA WIEBENSON, editor

This is the first comprehensive survey of architectural theory and its relation to practice from the Renaissance to the 19th century. The main body of the text includes over 200 individual entries by 48 eminent specialists that discuss the significance and background of a wide range of historical documents. Wiebenson's introduction summarizes the history of architectural theory and there are over 120 illustrations. *Architectural Publications Inc. £17.50.*

Barry Byrne and John Lloyd Wright

Architecture and Design

SALLY KITT CHAPPELL and ANN Van ZANTEN

This catalogue documents an exhibition of the work of Barry Byrne and John Lloyd Wright, and includes an interpretative essay on each, bibliographic guides, lists of buildings and projects and nearly 60 black & white and colour illustrations. *Chicago Historical Society, £7.00.*

CHICAGO

The University of Chicago Press

126 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1W 9SD

The anti-stodge possessed

S. J. Newman

STEPHEN BENATAR

Wish Her Safe at Home

220pp. Bodley Head. £6.95.
0 370 30491 8

With this marvellous book, character and poetry return to the English novel. It is the story of a middle-aged, middle-class spinster, Rachel Waring, who inherits from her great-aunt a house in Bristol, once the home of an eighteenth-century philanthropist. She gives up her flat and job in London and goes to live there, finding a scatty happiness in the place, the people and the task she sets herself, of writing the philanthropist's biography. Gradually, however, scattiness degenerates into madness.

The story is simple, the implications are complex. Rachel is one of the great English female characters, like the Wife of Bath or Flora Finching: both an individual and a species. Stephen Benatar hasn't so much invented her as been possessed by her. Indeed, he can't understand her. Rachel's own notion for her biography, "of working my way, *feeling* a wonderful and enriching instinct for the creation of links" is her creator's method, and from one angle the novel is a huge dramatic poem with Rachel starring in the greatest story ever told – her own. She is Scarlett O'Hara, Blanche DuBois, Snow White and Miss Havisham all rolled into one. She lives in a gorgeous soap opera, her Badedas prose winking with silly jokes, old songs, spontaneous aphorisms (you could compile a concordance of her sayings) and mad, tragic poetry. Her lovers include the dead philanthropist, her gardener, her chemist, her vicar, and an adolescent who ejaculates into her suspenders, to her eternal chagrin. She carries the banner for "poor disappointed ladies all", valiantly proclaiming herself the epitome of "the fun-group, the life enhancers, the anti-stodge".

To say she lives with gusto would be an understatement. She is a stream of semi-consciousness puckered by little genteel mannerisms. Bursts of violence choke her speech. Graveyards open in her mind. She buttonholes you with horrible clutching confidences, is always pawing at people, and claims she's murdered her brother. She suddenly needs to talk about disembowelling to a stranger in a train, and refers in a knowing way to compulsions "to punch a baby's stomach in the pram; or to use on someone standing next to you the carving knife you hold" (the buoyancy of the prose is typical). She has recurring fancies about things in dark corners, or being buried alive. She gushes vicarious emotions while writing her biography, but is a blank to the world around her. When eventually her conscience is probed she goes forth into the streets of Bristol, showering victims with bright sayings and her eternal false gaiety, barging into their lives with advice and assistance, pressing clean pound notes into grubby hands. Men fall off motorbikes and women collapse with epilepsy at her approach.

But there is a deeper disturbance present which is only partly related to Rachel's social character, and which reminds you of the flurry of panic and disaster that sometimes ruffles the surface of Larkin's poetry. The book is as confused and inchoate as its protagonist. Some primitive battle for mastery is going on, and it is hard to tell whether Rachel is murdering or being murdered. Her attempt to obliterate the characters around her into fantasy boomerangs on her, as it endows them with the shadowy menace of myth and nightmare. The author is equally ambiguous: he is overwhelmed by his creation, but you seem nevertheless to detect him treating her as Hitchcock might have treated Miss Bates if he had filmed *Emma*.

The sense of menace is related to the sense of form: Rachel's theatrical character is strait-jacketed by the novel. As with Browning's mad-house soliloquies, the reader can't escape judgment; that's why it's a poetic novel, not just a novel with a "character" in it. Rachel is everything the Houyhnhnms need to suppress: hysteria, frenzy, a wild, vague evangelicalism. Her world is full of portents. She would wage war passionately if she had a cause. At the end she goes raving mad, praying on her knees in a crowded bus in her now embroidered silk while the "editors" are running towards her in their white coats. Rachel the tragedienne, or Rachel weeping for her children? She remains an enigma. "A charmed life that carried a curse", she wonders to herself, "or a cursed life that carried a charm?" Well, we shall find out.

Posh-school SF

Richard Brown

DOUGLAS ADAMS

Life, the Universe and Everything

162pp. Arthur Barker. £6.50.
0 213 16847 2

Television and radio announcers have a distinctive but necessarily rather limited critical vocabulary. They use up all their superlatives on "gripping sagas", "action-packed crime-busters" and "uproarious, side-splitting" comedies, and have little left with which to package anything more genuinely youthful, imaginative and funny. It reflects rather badly on everyday programming that Douglas Adams's clever science-fiction comedies *The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy* are unfamiliar enough to be introduced into the domestic arena as "zany" and "madcap", and it is a comment on the mass audience that the enjoyment of such unexceptionable pleasures should be thought of as some kind of cult.

Programmes such as *I'm Sorry I'll Read That Again*, *Monty Python's Flying Circus* and *Not the Nine O'Clock News* manage to thrive on this special status – on the fact that they are held at a distance from the rest of the evening's offerings. They build up a semi-private language of stock situations, favourite satirical targets and recurring comic triggers, and have established an anarchic, facetious, though also teasingly symbiotic relationship with the fully domesticated mainstream. The good humour of that relationship shows up clearly in the characteristic play they make with the manners and language of news-readers and announcers themselves.

There is a rich vein of satire here into which Adams's writings fall, suggesting, in general, that some science-fiction takes itself just as appallingly seriously as, and can be exposed as no more imaginative than, the reading of the news. More specifically, Adams's SF is full of mocking but affectionate reminiscences of *Dr. Who*.

The mini-genre is one which seems to have evolved within the electronic media. *The Hitch-Hiker's Guide*, with its clipped, up-to-date, joke-a-minute style, bristling with gimmickry and microtechnological blobs and bleeps, seemed ideally suited to radio and even more so to television, where its diagrams and print-outs have an appeal somewhere between watching *Ceefax* and playing Space-Invaders.

As followers will know, the formula has been transferred with some success to the printed page. This latest volume, *Life, the Universe and Everything*, is the third, following on from *The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy* and *The Restaurant at the End of the Universe*. This gives the publishers the opportunity to talk of a "trilogy".

The constant element in Adams's plot is the helpless, semi-clad character of Arthur Dent, last remaining inhabitant of the Earth, which has been demolished to make way for an interstellar by-pass. Here, Arthur and his know-all space friend Ford Prefect find themselves caught up in the malevolent plan of the rulers of the planet Krikkit to destroy everything that isn't cricket and to seize the Golden Ball that will give them great power. Meanwhile Arthur hopes to discover the Ultimate Question of Life, knowing already that the Ultimate Answer to the Question is forty-two. The pair come across a number of extra-terrestrial phenomena, such as the planet of Squornshellous Zeta, whose swamps are inhabited by mattresses, and the Campaign for Real Time. This, though, is only the plot. Much of the comedy arises from a variety of pseudo-high-tech mis-information, reminiscent, in a way, of the spectacularly wrong-headed theories of the mysterious De Selby in Flann O'Brien's *The Third Policeman*.

The Hitch-Hiker's Guide retains its life on the page because much of this humour is primarily verbal, using mild parody, making the everyday absurd by giving it a strange name or simply by giving it a capital letter. It has an imaginative energy which derives as much from its consistent play with a cosy, familiar world – the suburban English world of cricket, dressing-gowns and by-passes – as from the extravagance of its characters and settings.

Adams's writing has a likeable, posh-school, wide-eyed, naive manner related, perhaps, to the primitive manner currently in vogue in high-brow poetic circles. It would be wrong, though, to claim too much for the books; Print shows up also the extent to which the humour depends on a limited repertoire of gimmicks, and this third volume, though by no means lacking in enthusiastic drive, does little to suggest that the idea could or should be taken much further from here.

Fast ladies

Jennifer Uglow

FRANCES VERNON

Privileged Children

199pp. Michael Joseph. £7.95.
0 7181 2165 1

Frances Vernon is a Cambridge undergraduate, a young woman historian whose first novel is, not surprisingly, about youth, women and history. Her confident prose sweeps us along with the fortunes of a group of London artists and intellectuals at the beginning of the century, past the rocks of Fabianism, women's suffrage and the First World War, to the General Strike and the beginning of the Depression. She steers us through the sexual revolution, from the days when, she suggests, prostitution was the only profession open to an independent but unqualified woman, to discussion of free love and lesbianism. *The Interpretation of Dreams* and *The Well of Loneliness*. She notes the minutiae of daily life with painstaking care, from Alice bands to orange lipstick, and her very names raise ghosts, from Augustus and Clementina, the Bohemians of 1904, to Tuffy and Toto Howard, bright young things of 1931.

The children of the title are Alice, the artist heroine, daughter of a wayward Irish beauty, Diana Molloy; her own daughter Finola; her step-daughters Liza and Jenny and her model Miranda, a fugitive from an exclusive boarding school. Their privilege is to grow up outside the rigid confines of a traditional British upbringing. Alice herself eagerly overturns conventional patterns: at the age of eight she spies on her mother in bed with a rich lover ("Bored, Alice sat back and banged her head on the window, which shuddered in its frame"), and at nine she deals coolly with creditors. She takes a lover at thirteen, becomes pregnant at fifteen to escape the chaperonage of her country-curate uncle, rejects her children, marries solely to legitimize her daughter, has an abortion and falls in love with the fourteen-year-old Miranda. By the end of the book she is lined and withered: "Her thin arms and legs protruded, naked and greyish, from her loose greyish clothes." She turns out to be thirty-three.

Despite the headlong pace of personal lives and historical movements, the saga of Alice and her household is highly enjoyable, and the characters command our attention even when they slip into representative types (woman doctor, homosexual, liberal pacifist, radical journalist) or when they reflect and pronounce, in distinctly 1980s accents, on History as We See It or The Meaning of Life. The social analysis is simple, even naive, and the earnest dialogue invites one to poke fun – but it is not inappropriate to the milieu, and the author uses it carefully to elaborate arguments implicit in the action. Her women are forthright about injustices to their sex, sexual hypocrisy, maternity and the family, and are clearly addressing current issues as well as depicting past attitudes. But the novel's most passionate statements concern childhood, which is seen as a fictional state invented by adults with amnesia. Diana states at the outset that "Parental rule is usually a benevolent despotism, of course, but it's arbitrary, absolute rule just the same and it creates a lifelong fear of independence. If you want adults to be free, really free, you must let children think and experiment for themselves", and Alice sighs "Sometimes I think it's considered a crime and a madness to be a child." The privileged children, in contrast to their peers, are hedged by no arbitrary restrictions, and are capable of formulating views on sex, social injustice and economic theory with easy confidence. Whether they are "really free" as adults is left open to question.

A conference on "Imagined Realities in Contemporary Women's Writing" will be held at Dyffryn House, St Nicholas, near Cardiff from October 29 – 31. The conference, which has been organized by the Welsh Arts Council and Yr Academi Gymreig (English Language Section) will include contributions from Margaret Atwood, Beryl Bainbridge, Fay Weldon, Angela Carter, Emma Tennant, Ruth Fainlight and Elgan Lewis Roberts. Further details from Sue Harris, Yr Academi Gymreig, Cory Building, 57 Bute Street, Cardiff CF1 6QP.

September Books from Yale

Namesake
Michel Goldberg
Goldberg is a French Jew whose father was killed at Auschwitz. His attempt to find and accept his own identity takes him from La Paz, Bolivia, where he tracks down the Nazi responsible for his father's death, to Entebbe, where he plays an important role as spokesman for the hostages.
"A confession that tears the reader apart" – Eric Roussel, *Le Monde*.
Illus. £7.95

Literary Landscape: Turner and Constable
Ronald Paulson
Paulson explores with remarkable subtlety the question of the relation of the landscape image to a wide range of verbal and visual "texts".
85 black-and-white illus. £15.00

Strindberg as Dramatist
Evert Sprinchorn
One of the world's greatest and most enigmatic playwrights is here examined by a leading American scholar of Scandinavian drama. £20.00

Flaubert and Kafka
Studies in Psychopoetic Structure
Charles Bernheimer
Bernheimer combines insights drawn from psychoanalysis, linguistics, and literary criticism to probe the desires and fears motivating Flaubert and Kafka and to interpret their major works. £17.50

Inventions
Writing, Textuality, and Understanding in Literary History
Gerald L. Bruns
The chapters of this book, each setting up a form of opposition between rhetoric and philosophy, constitute a topical history of writing. £14.50

Poetic Traditions of the English Renaissance
edited by Maynard Mack and George deForest Lord
Sixteen essays by internationally recognised scholars deal with historical, theoretical, and technical aspects of the work of poets from Spenser to Dryden. £14.00

Poets Historical
Dynastic Epic in the Renaissance
Andrew Fichter
Fichter shows the Renaissance epics as efforts to assimilate the *Aeneid* to a Christian culture, illuminating the relation between Renaissance poetry and classical models. £17.50

Estonian-English Dictionary
Paul F. Saagpakk
This is the largest bilingual dictionary of Estonian words, idioms, and phrases ever written. £105.00

The Architecture of the Roman Empire
1. An Introductory Study
William L. MacDonald
This revised edition includes an updated bibliography and a new chapter.
157 illus. Cloth £30.00 Paper £8.95

Freud's Odyssey
Psychoanalysis and the End of Metaphysics
Stan Draenos
Draenos contends that Freud's psychoanalytic theory was a bold attempt to reconcile natural science and philosophy by tracing mental life to a somatic ground. £14.50

Yale University Press
13 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3JF.

Fascism's friend

Julian Symons

DANIEL FARSON

Henry: An Appreciation of Henry Williamson

246pp. Michael Joseph. £8.95.
0 7181 2122 8

Henry Williamson was in several respects an uncomfortable man to know, and Daniel Farson treats him with admiration but uneasily, shifting often between factual accounts of passages in the life and chatty personal reminiscence. Is he writing a biography? Not exactly, because the definitive biography "will be written by his son Richard" who has access to all the papers. Not a literary assessment either, although he lets us know that Williamson's fifteen-volume *Chronicle of Ancient Sunlight* has been compared with Proust and Dickens, and makes a few comparisons of his own between Williamson and Dickens from which Williamson emerges favourably. Nor is this "one of those books so popular today which denigrate famous men and slip too easily into newspaper serialization": no denigrator, for sure, is Daniel Farson. So why write the book, and what kind of work is it? He feels that at times he treated Williamson sharply, although this is hardly apparent from the narrative, and this account of a friend and Devon neighbour is meant to redress the balance. By the time it was completed "I understood Henry Williamson better and liked him more."

It is unlikely that many readers will have the same reaction. Williamson emerges from this account as an eccentric with an enormous ego, a self-pitying figure who behaved with brutal insensitivity to his wives, a cantankerous man who blew up small quarrels, such as that with the author's father Negley Farson, into monumental rows, a braggart and a liar. He kept a Military Cross prominently displayed in a glass case, with the clear implication that it had been awarded to him for services in the First World War. When Farson wrote to the Ministry of Defence, however, he was told that Henry Williamson had received no MC. His reaction to the discovery shows the almost unlimited extent of his tolerance of Williamson. At first he was shocked. "It seemed that I had caught Henry out in the worst sort of lie." But he rapidly recovered. Things surely could not be what they seemed. Williamson, after all, had never *said* in Farson's hearing that he had won the MC. Perhaps he had bought the medal at a sale, or better still it might have belonged to a friend who had given it to him, "in which case possession would be wholly honourable".

In the same glass case Williamson kept his other favourite possession (the words are Farson's), a swastika armband. In the 1930s Williamson became a member of the Fascist movement, and a great admirer of Hitler ("whose life symbol is the happy child") and Sir Oswald Mosley. More unusually, he held these beliefs during and after the war, until his death in 1977. What Mosley had wanted, he explained to anybody prepared to listen patiently, was to get on with the welfare state. Unfortunately he had been a little before his time, and so had been persecuted. The concentration camps and the deaths of six million Jews? We hear nothing of Williamson's views on such things, but are assured that he was not antisemitic. Perhaps he made no distinction between Jews and the many other kinds of people he disliked.

Mr Farson's attitude towards Williamson's Fascism is typically equivocal. He does not exactly defend it, but asserts his subject's lifelong patriotism, admits his political naiveté, and complains that he was much worse treated than a left-wing Soviet agent like Anthony Blunt. The comparison is pointless, for if Blunt had been officially known to be recruiting agents or passing secret material to the Soviet Union during the war he would no doubt have been imprisoned. In the war years Williamson became exceedingly unpopular among the country people near his Norfolk farm, because he insisted on emphasizing his support of Hitler by such gestures as painting the Fascist lightning flash on his house and car. It was said that some villagers shot through the farm windows at the naked light bulbs he showed in defiance of the black-out, and that the contents of his dustbins were sifted by neighbours presumably looking for pro-German documents. Williamson's proud claim that he had been arrested and imprisoned without trial, however, proved to be one with the presumptive MC. The Norfolk Chief Constable found that he had spent only one night in the cells before being released as a harmless eccentric.

"As for his sympathy with the German people, can we altogether condemn him?" The question so disingenuously put ignores the fact that Williamson's sympathy was not with "the German people" but with the Nazi dictatorship. The differences between Williamson's views, and those of other writers, like Eliot and Wyndham Lewis, who at one time looked for authoritarian solutions to the problems of the 1930s, were enormous. Their views proceeded from opposition to the liberal feeling that had prevailed in most of Europe for a century, and were given intellectual backing, cautious in Eliot's case, rash in Lewis's, in books and articles. Both had rejected Fascism as a respectable intellectual creed before the outbreak of the Second World War. Such thoughts never entered Williamson's head, and indeed the whole process of thinking was uncongenial to him. He merely knew that Hitler was a good man (he indulged a fantasy that they had met in the Christmas Day fraternization of 1914), and felt happiness and goodness suffusing the audience when he attended a Nuremberg rally. It would be charitable to say that in politics he was a simple-minded man.

Was he also personally a wholly detestable one? Evidently not. He retained Farson's sympathy, he had other friends, the young loved him, mentally, and some of them also physically. You either loathed this half-crazed English eccentric, or found him a delightful character who could be forgiven – who had to be forgiven – anything. His principal literary achievement is without doubt the fifteen volumes which tell through fiction his own life-story. The first half-dozen of them, about his childhood, his relationship with his father, life in the trenches, have freshness and charm, and evoke finely the hopes and feelings of the young in the years before 1914. The later volumes fall away into bickering, snarling or whining egoism, and at the end an insistence on the virtues of Fascism. Yet at best the *Chronicle* can be called no more than a minor achievement, flawed by too great an insistence on personal feelings. The nature books show the patient sympathy for animals that Williamson never extended to human beings, but they can hardly be taken as the work of a great writer. Perhaps, after all, his son Richard might be well advised not to use the "vast documentation" Henry Williamson left behind for that definitive biography. It might be wiser to let Mr Farson's book serve as the friendliest possible picture of this loveable or hateful old grouch.



"Peasant and dog, Haute-Savoie", from John Berger and Jean Mohr's Another Way of Telling *(300pp. Writers and Readers. £6.95. 0 906495 69 5).*

Detection's Dame

T. J. Binyon

CHARLES OSBORNE

The Life and Crimes of Agatha Christie

256pp. Collins. £9.95.
0 00 216462 0

There's an ominous giggle in the title of this bio-bibliographical study of Agatha Christie which, unfortunately, only too aptly adumbrates the tone of the contents. However, Charles Osborne has at least performed a service to humanity in that he has established what must be a complete list of Agatha Christie's works: sixty-eight crime novels, 146 short stories in eighteen collections, seventeen plays (mostly adapted from novels or short stories), two autobiographical works, two volumes of poems, a collection of stories and poems on religious themes (*Star Over Bethlehem*, 1964), and six straight novels under the name of Mary Westmacott. Each separate publication has a section to itself, in which a short snippet of biography is combined with comment on the work in question. The arrangement is an odd one, and its oddity is reinforced by the fact that the writing of a book usually antedates its publication. So, in a section headed *The Sittaford Mystery* (1931), we are told how *Lord Edgeware Dies* was written in Iraq, on a table bought for £10 (or maybe only £3) in the bazaar at Mosul. The section entitled *Lord Edgeware Dies* (1933), of course, tells us of the composition of *Murder on the Orient Express*.

As far as biography is concerned, the book is disappointing. It conveys not a great deal more than could be gleaned from the autobiographies of Agatha Christie herself, and of her second husband, Max Mallowan: Osborne even gives rather cursory treatment to the one startling event in his subject's life: her disappearance, in December 1926, from her house in Sunningdale – she was discovered a week later, allegedly suffering from amnesia, in the Hydropathic Hotel at Harrogate, where she was staying under the name of Teresa Neele.

In the preface Osborne proudly informs us that nowhere in his book is the identity of any of Agatha Christie's murderers revealed. This, of course, precludes any serious discussion of the novels. Indeed, it precludes almost any discussion; since the books are pure puzzles, with the author's deception of the reader beginning on the first page, there is very little for Osborne to do other than to note the setting and list the characters, indicating their sex, age and calling. Such self-restraint, however, would produce an extremely thin volume, and the author has endeavoured to plump the subject out in a number of ways. He indulges in playful speculation on the extra-novelistic life of Hercule Poirot: when did he retire from the Belgian police? was it in 1904, or later? how old is he in the final novel (*Curtain*, 1975), one hundred and twenty, or only eighty-five? is his flat in Whitehaven, Whitehouse, or Whitefriars Mansions?

This is desperately thin stuff, and the reason is not far to seek. Unlike Sherlock Holmes or Nero Wolfe, Poirot is in no sense a fully realized character with an independent life of his own. He is impossible to visualize; it was not by chance that Agatha Christie was in the habit of doing away with him when adapting her works for the stage. And if she was abominably careless about his address, it was because she didn't care for him sufficiently to remember it. The self-caricature she offers in some novels with the figure of the detective novelist Ariadne Oliver, saddled with an appalling incubus in the shape of a disastrously misconceived Finnish detective, cuts perhaps nearer the bone than she intended. Indeed, none of her characters is fully rounded and lifelike – though in *The Moving Finger* (1942), perhaps her best work, they are on the verge of becoming so. If they were, they would burst wide open the puzzles which contain them.

Though he may not reveal the murderer, in his comments on the novels Osborne gives us a superfluity of arch nudges and winks in his (or her) direction, and completes the padding-out with full cast lists of plays, films and television productions adapted from the stories; with such tidbits of information as – of *Death on the Nile* – the fact that: "It was the first time in many years that a foreign film had been made in Egypt. The interior scenes were shot in England"; and with answers to his own rhetorical questions' about Agatha Christie's attitude towards the Army & Navy Stores: "Would her affection have survived its renovation and rebuilding in the mid-seventies? Probably."

Osborne's discussion of the Mary Westmacott novels is more apropos and interesting, though the descriptions suggest that the valuation he places on them as literature is more than a thought exaggerated. Certainly his view that in these novels "the author is freed of the requirements to steer her characters along certain paths so that they can be manipulated into making the right moves to establish the necessary pattern that a crime novel must have" does nothing to inspire confidence in his literary judgment.

Agatha Christie still awaits a definitive biography (if such should be considered necessary); and awaits, too, a detailed study of her *oeuvre*. Such a study would have to grapple with two main tasks. It would have to attempt a formal analysis of the Christie method and show how many tricks there actually are in her repertoire. Secondly, it would have to haphazard an opinion as to why her novels are only outsold by the Bible and Shakespeare. And the answer to this last would not be, as Mr Osborne appears to believe, that she is the best crime novelist around.

The allusive round

Alan Bell

RUPERT HART-DAVIS (Editor)

The Lyttelton Hart-Davis Letters: Volume IV. 1959

186pp. John Murray. £12.50.
0 7195 3941 2

By the time of this fourth volume Rupert Hart-Davis and George Lyttelton are firmly set in their epistolary stride, and since the revelations about Sir Rupert's relationship with Mrs Simon were made in the previous year, George Lyttelton is now able to share more closely in his friend's private life, often adding a gallant personal message for Ruth to his weekly letter to Rupert. Addicts of the previous three volumes will have come to take the regular weekly pattern for granted, and even to forgive the occasional repetition in the way that an accidental reiteration of a story by an old friend is tactfully ignored. Lyttelton's letters, however, are not compounded of the *crambe repetita*, although the greater evenness of the pattern of his life leads to a predictability of tone and attitude against which his range of literary allusiveness appears all the more striking. Even the intolerances are much the same this year, for Angus Wilson ("immensely clever and entirely unreadable") as well as for Amis and Leavis; the latter's Cambridge college is mentioned as one where "every prospect pleases and only man is vile".

Rupert Hart-Davis's busy publishing life continues to regard the completion of the Oscar Wilde edition, though further patches of material come to light while editorial work proceeds. An enervating attack of jaundice makes his annual holiday in Swaledale particularly welcome, recruiting him for the autumn, when the London Library rating appeal provides its chairman with a vast amount of additional work. The range of his activities – with the BBC Advisory Council starting during the year, but regular crime fiction reviewing in *Time and Tide* probably coming to an end – never ceases to astonish us.

Well-known though this will be to devotees of a correspondence which (as Lyttelton remarks) "in quantity, quality and regularity has already reached majestic proportions", a steady stream of recondite literary references continues to refresh the weekly round. Although Lyttelton sometimes finds G. M. Young's writings "teasingly allusive", he can himself tease and allude to great advantage, whether with a Kipling quotation or a reference to Lamplough's Pyretic Saline. And his wit (like that of his correspondent) never relies exclusively on apposite anecdote or quotation. He reports having seen in a railway carriage:

> a very plain elderly lady who smeared and powdered herself *twice* between Liverpool Street and Colchester. At the end she gazed long at her handiwork in her glass, and, like the Creator at the end of the sixth day, saw that it was good. I could have told her different.

Two of the best literary references in this 1959 volume are to early nineteenth-century writers. George Lyttelton writes that "I nearly misjudged Porson when he wrote of Southey's *Madoc* that 'it would be remembered when Homer and Virgil were forgotten', but he regained his pedestal with a bound by adding 'and not until then'." And later in the year Rupert Hart-Davis discovered Cobbett's own advertisement in his *English Grammar* (1824): "This work has been published to the amount of *fifty-five thousand copies*, without ever having been mentioned by the old shuffling bribed sots, called Reviewers."

GRAHAM GREENE
His new novel

Monsignor Quixote

'A deliciously funny novel.'
MICHAEL RATCLIFFE, *The Times*

'Mr Greene, who has travelled long and far himself, has rarely done so as remarkably as in this profound and funny novel.'
WILLIAM TREVOR, *Guardian*

'The writing is very fine. The jokes gently beautiful . . . *Monsignor Quixote*, the novel, will live for a long time.'
DAVID HOLLOWAY, *Daily Telegraph*

'Superbly funny episodes . . . a devastating blend of humour and sharp insight.'
MARIA COUTO, *New Statesman*

'A powerful late work . . . a mixture of entertainment and deep human awareness.'
MALCOLM BRADBURY, *Vogue*
0 370 30923 5 £5.95

STEPHEN BENATAR
Wish Her Safe at Home

A brilliantly evocative new novel by the author of *The Man on the Bridge*.
0 370 30491 8 £6.95

BETTE PESETSKY
Stories up to a Point

'These stories show a controlled originality, a distinctive and consistent vision . . . They read like telegraphic dispatches from the battlefield of modern life . . . They carry, some of them, important news from the front.'
New York Times Book Review
0 370 30483 7 £5.95

REX WARNER
The Aerodrome

Rex Warner's famous novel has been unavailable for some years. It is now released with a new introduction by Anthony Burgess.
0 370 30928 X £6.95

BODLEY HEAD

commentary

Running conditions

Andrew Hislop

Mike Leigh Season
BBC TV

"Try acting", Laurence Olivier is reputed to have told Dustin Hoffman when "the Method", which demanded that he *became* the Marathon Man, threatened to cause his physical collapse. It is a measure of Mike Leigh's skill as a dramatist of improvisation, who creates plays by making actors first *become* characters and then letting scenes evolve, that his work does not invite more often the suggestion that he should try writing. No doubt the RSC administration were sorely tempted when the failure of a play to "evolve" in rehearsal led to the cancellation of their Mike Leigh production; and, judging from the snippets shown on television, the improvised play about improvising a play, which Arena commissioned for their profile of Leigh, seemed in dire need of some *deus ex machina*, if not a mortal at a typewriter. But there are also times even in the fittest and funniest of the plays (and at their best they are exquisitely comic and cruelly poignant) when pace, dialogue or plot could have been improved by a contrived intervention. Leigh does impose himself on a production sufficiently to claim "authorship"; but his reluctance to interfere is such that with *Grown-Ups*, the story of a young couple plagued by the wife's spinster sister, he waited hours for the actress who played the sister to discover for herself what he knew to be the film's crucial dramatic development – her finding refuge in the house next door when thrown out by the couple.

The television profile, however, does not give the impression of an exponent of hard-line group theatre. Leigh admits the influence of Peter Brook but eschews the mysticism aspired to by the more monastic of theatrical communities and championed over quails in the recent film *My Dinner with André*. Supper with Mike would produce not so much Grotowski à la carte, as humorous anecdotes of actors trying out their characters' traits in the real world, a commentary on human "running conditions" (as Leigh calls these traits) rather than a running commentary on the Human Condition: Antony Sher in the character of a Saudi prince for *Goosepimples* really being taken by a taxi-driver for an ailing Arab armed with ladies of the night, a Dorset pub astonished as some of the cast of *Nuts in May* suddenly come out of loutish character. Leigh's actors, for the most part excellent, clearly enjoy and respond to the creative role they are given. One of them found it particularly profitable when her character developed a running condition of shop-lifting – not an obviously unavoidable preparation for her brief non-purloining appearance on the screen. Phil Davies, a superb portrayer of the young malcontent in both scripted and improvised drama, found, however, his presence in bed with an actress for the recording of a love scene in a radio play (untransmitted) disturbingly authentic. Some running conditions are easier to handle than others.

The compulsive combinations of obsessive characteristics with which Leigh guides us through the English class system produce a particular form of comedy of manners – what might be called the theatre of embarrassment. It is not merely that it revels in the awkward encounter rather than the tragic confrontation (Laurence's heart-attack in *Abigail's Party* is only a *faux pas*, an untimely mortal grovel on the Axminster), but that the characters themselves are embarrassments. Leigh makes his actors develop their characters in isolation before they "interact" with each other but, as David Edgar has pointed out, this often results in an attitude of contempt towards them. In the four major works in this season (*Nuts in May*, *Abigail's Party*, *Who's Who*, *Grown-Ups*) there are very few sympathetic characters and their unappealing traits are often exaggerated to the point of caricature. As a result we are less moved by the situations they find themselves in. The ghastliness of the sister's predicament in *Grown-Ups* engenders less pity because she is so ghastly. (A more recent film, *Home Sweet Home*, does, however, portray the relationship of a postman to his daughter in care in a very moving manner.)

Of the sexes, women are the more cruelly treated: Beverly in *Abigail's Party* is a paragon of awfulness even surpassing the sister in *Grown-Ups*, and her curried-pilchard-loving friend, Angie, a worthy support; of the classes, the lower-middle – the sycophantic, snobbish stockbroker's clerk and his cat-obsessed wife in



"Girl with a Racquet", an engraving of 1742 by F. B. Lépicié père from the exhibition Prints after J. B. S. Chardin *at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.*

Who's Who, the folk-singing, vegetarian couple nutty in May, Laurence and Beverly crossing spiritual cocktail sticks over Denis Roussos and sub-erotic blue-period prints from the school of Woolworth. The upper classes, represented only in *Who's Who*, get off surprisingly lightly – silly (sometimes very) rather than insane and, in the case of the senior stockbroker, more privileged than absurd.

Patterns emerge not only in characterization but also in dramatic momentum – long periods of slow pace being broken by sudden conflict. These running conditions in the character of Leigh's drama belie the quality that has often been used to describe it – a heightened naturalistic realism. Undoubtedly, many acute observations of human behaviour are incorporated into his work (more so than in that of many individual authors) but imitation, still less caricature, is not a passport to reality; and a theatre which is based on characters constructed in isolation, rather than the imitation of the activity of a social group, tends to create dramatic situations which are not mimetic let alone unimpeachably "real". It is significant that in *Who's Who*, which is centred on an institution (a stockbroker's office) where the characters necessarily "interact", a plot is not forged, as it is in *Grown-Ups*, by the sudden forcing together of two separately evolved groups. Instead, the film dissolves into individual episodes about members of the office.

But if Leigh's technique is not a sure route to social, still less political, truth, then his plays must be judged in terms of their ability to entertain and instruct from a subjective point of view. In which case the argument for intervention to sharpen or clarify that point of view becomes stronger. Pluralism, rather than prescription, is healthy for the theatre (even didactic political theatre) but just as playwrights who treat actors as puppets have much to learn from Leigh, so he too could benefit from the techniques of writers who, though only able to improvise between their ears, are intimate with the running conditions of Tipp-Ex.

Shakespeare shanghaied

S. Schoenbaum

International Shakespeare Conference
Stratford-upon-Avon

At the International Shakespeare Conference held at Stratford-upon-Avon in 1981, Professor Philip Brockbank, lately installed as director of the University of Birmingham's Shakespeare Institute, stirred the delegates when he introduced Professor Lin Tung-chi. A rather fragile older man, Lin had come from Fudan University in Shanghai. He carried a scroll, handsomely inscribed in Chinese characters, with a poem paying tribute to the Institute and its conference. Professor Lin has, since died, but the Chinese connection thrives. Among the newcomers at this year's conference, the twentieth, were Professor Ying Zhouhan from Peking University and, Professor Lu Gui-sun director of the lately established Shakespeare Library at Fudan.

Some of us were a little apprehensive about the prospect of meagre attendance, for only last summer Stratford had played host to the World Shakespeare Congress, which meets every fifth year in a different venue. As things worked out, some 170 of the faithful turned up, from Kent and Ghent, from Tbilisi State University, Soviet Georgia and the University of Georgia in the New World Athens; from thirty countries all told. I didn't meet the delegate listed in the programme as from the Polish Writers' Union, although I understand he showed up; but the East Germans were absent, including a man, from Humboldt University down for an address. Those who came were impressed with the generally high standard set by the papers.

Professor Lu dwelt on the relatively recent enthusiasm for *Hamlet*, as for Shakespeare generally, in the People's Republic. After a ten-year freeze, translations and studies now abound; a China Shakespeare Society flourishes in the lakeside city of Hangzhou, and at Lhasa *Romeo and Juliet* had been successfully produced in Tibetan, with a Tibetan cast. This paper, like most of the others, suited well the accommodating conference theme, "Shakespeare and the Twentieth Century".

The Nigerian playwright Wole Soyinka, from the University of Ife, talked unsolemnly about Shakespeare's hold on modern dramatists, and in doing so made the Arabic connection – the Nile must have flowed in the veins of Sheikh Zubair when he turned to *Antony and Cleopatra*. Others were occupied with the self that Auden brought to the Shakespearean mirror, or with other moderns – Stoppard, Graves, Eliot – and Shakespeare. In a thoughtfully long paper Professor Philip Edwards placed *Hamlet* in the context of modern criticism and the modern sensibility. Recent developments in textual studies had their innings when Dr Stanley Wells challenged, with stimulating lucidity, the traditional editorial recourse to conflation of the 1608 Quarto and 1623 Folio texts of *King Lear*, characterized as a pair of legitimate – although far from identical – twins.

The RSC offered an ampler menu of evening diversions than in some recent seasons. The gorgeous and unabashedly romantic *Much Ado About Nothing* – directed by Terry Hands and designed by Ralph Koltai – and the magical *Tempest* of Ron Daniels, won greatest applause, Derek Jacobi holding audiences in the palm of his hand as both Benedick and Prospero. I had several years earlier much enjoyed Michael Gambon as the dim-witted veterinary Tom in Alan Ayckbourn's *Norman Conquests*, so naturally I had great expectations of his Lear; but these alas were disappointed; Adrian Noble's gimmicky production enthralled some conferees, repelled others, and left the rest (myself included) disturbingly undisturbed.

Conference innovations this year included replicas and plans connected with projected reconstructions of the Globe playhouse, one in its original Southwark habitat, the other in Middle American Detroit; also an exhibition of illustrations and theatrical designs by the incomparable C. Walter Hodges. Many took advantage of the opportunity to pad about in the paddock behind Mason Croft, where our meetings were held; there Hodges had laid out, in vinyl-coated cloth strips, a ground plan, at full size, of his Globe reconstruction for Detroit.

The first conference concert ever, conducted in Shakespeare's Guild Chapel by Colin Timms, featured the baritone Christopher Underwood and that fine soprano Elizabeth Lage, along with nine instrumentalists, in a programme of rarely performed eighteenth-century pieces inspired by Shakespeare. William Boyce's beguiling "Ode to the Memory of Shakespeare" was given for only the second time in this century, and was enthusiastically received, as were the other pieces.

Members of the Riverside Actors Workshop will present their new production *News* at Riverside Studios, Crisp Road, Hammersmith, London W6, from September 24 to October 3, at 9.30pm. The play was specially created through improvisation and rehearsal by David Leveaux and was first presented at the Edinburgh Festival. The cast is Caroline Embling, Piers Ibbotson, Shona Morris, Roderick Smith and Michele Wade. Also at Riverside Studios a survey exhibition from the resources of the National Theatre Museum may be seen until October 3.

commentary

The betrayal of an idea

P. N. Furbank

LUIGI PIRANDELLO
The Rules of the Game
Theatre Royal, Haymarket

The fog, or fug, of philistinism is pretty thick, I am sorry to say, at the Haymarket. Here is a writer who is, perhaps, not quite Ibsen, but whose ideas are by now part of our equipment and whose challenges still have some power to disturb. Here too is a play with, perhaps, not quite the weight of its successors *Six Characters* and *Henry IV* – still, we felt keyed-up at the prospect of witnessing it. Sad to report then, that the evening is largely disastrous: not obviously disastrous, but imperceptibly blighted, by the endemic pest of facetiousness.

One way of coping, in the West End, if you are not quite sure what to make of a play, is to show that you have kept your sense of humour and your sense of proportion. It is to send the play up, ever so slightly but continually, and to play for easy laughs – it does not matter too much at what. Further, it is to respect a certain axiom: that if a stage-character expounds an idea he is probably a weirdo, and the laugh is automatically against him.

In *The Rules of the Game*, the marriage of Leone and Silia Gala has fallen disastrously apart, and Leone has found a bizarre solution, both to this and to life generally. The way to master any given human imbroglio, he has discovered, is by a sort of weasel's trick. You suck the life and humanity out of it and are left with an egg-shell, a pure form, which may offer aesthetic pleasure, and which at least you can do what you like with – crush it in your palm if you so decide. To play this game you must respect rules – all rules, both those you construct for yourself and those that are imposed on you. Thus Leone leaves Silia, moving to a bachelor flat, and giving her total freedom; nevertheless he is still a husband, the shell of a husband, and according to the rules husbands look after wives. So, by rigid treaty, he visits her each day for a certain half hour, measured exactly by the watch; or for preference he stays downstairs and inquires after her from the concierge. As a result, of course, Silia, who had been driven mad by his presence, as he had been by hers, is driven even more crazy by his presence *in absentia*. There now seems no escape from him in the whole universe, and to take a lover proves no remedy. At last, though, fate seems to offer Silia a relief and a revenge on Leone. By a stroke of good fortune, and with a little help from herself, she has her honour insulted by a group of tipsy men-about-town; and what do the rules say about insulted wives, even those with a lover? Why, that their husband must risk his life to avenge the dishonour. So she rushes gleefully to her husband, thinking, poor innocent, that she is learning the "game".

How this question of *detachment* obsessed writers in the aesthetic period! Henry James, as we know, found in it one of his richest themes. That the artist, with his passion for form, may be, perhaps must be, a monster and a menace to humanity – this was a possibility he explored with passion. As for Pirandello, he could not let the theme alone, pursuing it through a labyrinth of ironies, genial as well as implacable (but always self-accusing). There is a wonderful little finale. Rarely pausing to listen to each other, the guests tell their stories with such un-self-pitying verve that the pain and injustice emerge almost incidentally, yet in particularly sharp relief.

By contrast, the sketches set in the Top Girls office fall flat. Played by the same performers doubling roles, the three interviewees seem to have been set up as illustrations of How Women Fail. Their complaints may be morally valid, but are dramatically frail, and work against the play's own thesis, perfectly plausible in itself, that women even now haven't got it made. These scenes belong to a different level of reality, a more drably literal play. The appearance of the wife of Marlene's male rival in order to proclaim her husband's sense of injury (so devastating, in fact, that it results in a heart attack) is even more over-didactic and ineffective. Fortunately these aberrations are temporary, and dramatic interest is retrieved once Churchill picks up the thread of her narrative concerning Marlene, Joyce and her truculent, slow-witted sixteen-year-old daughter, Angie. Angie leaves home, visits her beloved Auntie Marlene at the agency and declares that she has come to live with her. The chronological story ends with Marlene's grimly realistic comment on the girl's future: "She's not going to make it".

The play, however, goes on with a flash-back to the previous year in which Marlene, on a rare social visit engineered by Angie, confronts Joyce (a fine performance by the versatile Deborah Findlay) in her dim, rural council-house kitchen. As in the first scene, inebriation is the process by which the characters are released into eloquence, but in this case the eloquence is hostile, bristling with hints of past pains and deprivations (Joyce's failed marriage, Marlene's two abortions, a drunken, wife-beating father). In an extraordinarily effective piece of dialogue, the characters seem to change places before our eyes: Marlene shouts, weeps, pleads for sympathy and it is Joyce who gains stature by rejecting her sister's wheedling attempts at eliciting a compromise. As we learn that Angie is really Marlene's illegitimate child, so Marlene's success is revealed as hollow, subsidized. Churchill offers us a Hobbesian version of feminist theory in which men's achievement depends on their exploitation of women, and women's on their exploitation of other women. The dark and desolate force of this retrospectively lends the first scene of celebration a considerable pathos; we have to remind ourselves that in the narrative sequence, the success comes later. Marlene, with all the selfish force inherent in natural evolution, has survived and prospered.

Top Girls is published by Methuen (43pp. paperback £1.95, 0 413 51510 9).

The price of success

Carol Rumens

CARYL CHURCHILL
Top Girls
Royal Court Theatre

In this vigorous if untidy parable for Thatcher's Britain, Caryl Churchill begins by attacking the prevalent view that any woman worth her salt is perfectly free to become a Top Girl, like our leader, then rather deftly shifts her argument to class. Neither the "Patriarchy v Women" nor the "Us v Them" theme is, of course, an original one for the modern dramatist; what is distinctive in this play is the linking of the two and the skill with which Churchill manipulates her sparring sisters, Marlene and Joyce, as symbols, while creating entirely credible characters. Their argument in the last scene has all the bleak resonance of cradle-bred rivalry, despite some earlier hints of authorial pamphleteering.

In a sparklingly surrealist first scene, the high-flying, nouveau middle-class Marlene (Gwen Taylor) gives a dinner to celebrate her promotion (above a male rival we never meet) to Managing Director of the Top Girls employment agency. Her guests are a delightfully varied quintet of women from history or myth: Dulle Griet (Carole Hayman), Lady Nijo, an eighteenth-century Japanese courtesan (Lindsay Duncan), the ninth-century transvestite Pope Joan (Selina Cadell), Isabella Bird Bishop (Deborah Findlay) and an excruciatingly patient Griselda (Lesley Manville). The cast does a superb job of characterization, humorous but never merely parodic, and the whole episode becomes almost the verbal equivalent of some wonderfully spirited Mozart operatic finale. Rarely pausing to listen to each other, the guests tell their stories with such un-self-pitying verve that the pain and injustice emerge almost incidentally, yet in particularly sharp relief.

By contrast, the sketches set in the Top Girls office fall flat. Played by the same performers doubling roles, the three interviewees seem to have been set up as illustrations of How Women Fail. Their complaints may be morally valid, but are dramatically frail, and work against the play's own thesis, perfectly plausible in itself, that women even now haven't got it made.

Fifty years on: a Palace intruder

The TLS of September 22, 1932, carried the following review of 'The Queen's Progress: Nine Palace Plays by *Laurence Housman*':

In a series of short plays, extending from the first Privy Council in 1837 to the Diamond Jubilee sixty years later, Mr Housman indicates the development of Queen Victoria's character. The first piece, *"Poor Mamma!"* shows the Queen in contact with her uncles and the Duchess of Kent immediately after her accession, and suggests the rapidity with which she broke free from restrictive influences. *Woman Proposes* (1839) and *Leading Strings* (1841) bring Prince Albert on the scene, first as a young foreigner to whom Victorian offers her hand, afterwards as a man determined to become something more than his wife's plaything and to win for himself a share in the work of her life. . . . *The Intruder* (1845) tells of the encounter, in one of the drawing-rooms late at night, between a harmless madman, who has broken into the palace, and the Prince, who has come down to see that the candles have been put out and the furniture covered in accordance with his orders. From this and the following sketch, which introduces King Edward, as a youth, Martin Tupper and Disraeli, the conscientious stiffness of the Prince Consort clearly emerges . . .

The Queen's objection that in Benjamin Constant's painting of her the face was not red nor the ribbon of the garter blue enough, is related with ingenious shrewdness; there is an amusing battle between two determined ladies when audience is granted to a Canon's wife known as the "She-bear of Windsor"; Mr Gladstone hands in his resignation (March, 1894) and Mrs Gladstone is affectionately kissed by the Queen; and on June 20, 1897, the great lady, *Happy and Glorious*, is wheeled out on to the balcony to receive the cheers of the crowd . . . The dialogue—particularly that in which Disraeli and his Royal mistress discuss at delicious cross-purposes the merit of Martin Tupper—is clear and flowing; the intertwining of etiquette with personal feeling is neatly done; and, though we see the Queen from without, rather than from within, the peculiar quality of her greatness does steadily appear.

New Oxford books: Literature

Gissing: A Life in Books
John Halperin
Writers' lives are rarely as interesting as their books. The life of George Gissing is an exception. In this absorbing new biography, John Halperin draws on unpublished letters, the author's diaries, and other private papers to construct the portrait of a man entrenched in his time, solidly Victorian, yet a precursor of much that was to preoccupy the twentieth century.
Illustrated £18.50

The Sporting World of R.S. Surtees
John Welcome
'Surtees is one of our best comic writers, enjoyable even by those of us who are on the side of the foxes, and would never set crupper on one of the horsey set unless driven to it. Here is a lively and overdue biography and critical assessment of one of our finest sporting journalists.'
The Times. Illustrated £9.95

Pea Soup
Christopher Reid
Readers of Christopher Reid's *Arcadia* may detect a new, more sombre note in this new collection, and yet the comic spirit and enjoyment of metaphor still prevail. The opening poems dwell on domestic themes, and are followed by pieces which explore more exotic territory. The book ends with a handful of love poems addressed to the poet's wife.
Paperback £4.50

Minute by Glass Minute
Anne Stevenson
At the heart of this book is a long poem conceived when Anne Stevenson revisited the Green Mountains of Vermont, known to her since childhood, leaving behind the Black Mountains of South Wales, where she was living at the time. 'Green Mountain, Black Mountain,' springing from the correspondence of physical and spiritual landscape that has recurred as a source of impetus in her work, grew into an elegy for her parents. It also gives a new perspective to her own expatriate existence and to the work that makes up the rest of the collection. Paperback £4.50
7 October

Joseph Hall
A Study in Satire and Meditation
Richard A. McCabe
Bishop Joseph Hall (1574-1656) was known not only for his satirical and controversial works, but also for his poems, meditations, devotional works, and autobiographical tracts. Richard McCabe shows how the meditative and satiric strains in his thought were complementary, and reassesses Hall's status as a creative artist and a literary innovator. £27.50

Oxford University Press

to the editor

The OED

Sir, – Roy Harris's review of Volume 3 of the *Supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary* (September 3) is a model of penetrating and discriminating thought for which the discipline of lexicography and the broader discipline of linguistics are the better. In his last ten paragraphs, however, his just appreciation of the insights yielded by the structural study of language leads him to make dismissive statements about historical language study, and in particular historical lexicography, which to me seem seriously misleading in principle.

This part of Harris's review is in my opinion misleading chiefly because it does not take sufficiently into account one universally observable fact about language: in any language community whose language continues to exist and be recorded through an appreciable period of time, the linguistically more conservative and more innovative members (roughly speaking, the older and the younger members) of the language community, year by year, decade by decade, century by century, act in their daily lives on the assumption that they are speakers of the same language (with all due contempt for the vagaries which each lot perceives in the other lot's usage patterns), and yet "imperceptibly" the language changes, even to the point where its present users are not able to understand its earlier or earliest recorded forms, and sometimes not even able to understand each other. (Consider the Romance languages as divergent end-products of the "imperceptible" change of spoken Latin through time.) This statement is neither so ethnocentric nor so simplistic as it may sound. It is not ethnocentric, for it remains valid through vicissitudes like immigration, emigration, conquest, subjection to conquest, and dominant influence of another language community's culture, all of which have affected the English language (for example) during its centuries of existence. Nor is it simplistic, because it means that a language does not have a perfectly identical structure for all its contemporaneous users, and this in turn means that language structure, however scrupulously examined as existing at a given time, is not a stable and abiding system, but itself participates in the dynamics of language change.

To a degree, Harris is right to question, and in effect deny, that "when Shakespeare's contemporaries used the word *happy* they were using the same word as we still use nowadays". Admittedly the "continuous existence" of a word is not "independent" nor "physical" like that of a tree, building, rock stratum, or biological species, but depends on its repetition by user after user through time. Yet if "continuous existence" of words is to this degree a fiction, it is a procedurally useful fiction, and the polarly opposed concept that "*a* language has *a* structure at *a given* time" is also a fiction, and one that is best defended on the same grounds, that it is procedurally useful. I do not say that the last words between quotation marks in the previous sentence are Harris's tacit assumption, for there are many statements in his review which show that they are not, for instance when he speaks of "the very complex social and situational diversification of English". But then, neither did Murray, Bradley, Craigie and Onions, and neither does Burchfield, proceed on the tacit assumption that language exists as independently of humankind as rock strata do. In fact a large part of the procedural usefulness of both the historical fiction and the structuralist fiction lies in the insights that workers in each sub-discipline can furnish to workers in the other. When structural linguists are ready to make "a serious start . . . on treating the recording of English vocabulary as part of the systematic analysis of . . . structures of communication", let us hope they do not neglect to mine the Murray-Bradley-Craigie-Onions Dictionary and its Craigie-Onions and Burchfield Supplements.

CHARLES R. SLEETH.
Department of English, Brooklyn College of the City University of New York, Brooklyn, New York 11210.

PLR

Sir, – The rhetoric of Godfrey Carter's diatribe about PLR (Letters, September 17) is extraordinarily illinformed.

This gentleman lawyer seems to be under the impression that PLR was pupped as the result of a mass immaculate conception by lady novelists (as he terms them) – with "politico-literary personages of greater or lesser eminence in both Houses of Parliament" as their accoucheurs. The facts are different.

It is certainly true that Brigid Brophy and Maureen Duffy – of each of whom it might be said "That's no lady, that's a novelist" – worked indefatigably for PLR; but of the five original members of Writers' Action Group, two were men – or, as Godfrey Carter would probably prefer, gentlemen: Michael Levey and myself.

For *decades* before the formation of Writers' Action Group by us, writers had been crusading for PLR. Among them, A. P. Herbert, John Brophy, Michael Holroyd and Victor Bonham-Carter at once come to mind. For *decades* the Performing Right Society had been collecting fees on behalf of composers.

When Godfrey Carter was drafting his Bill, he was apparently unaware that PLR was already in existence in a number of countries. West German PLR payments have already reached English authors, though English ones have not.

Mr Carter puts forward the odd notion that if, after reading five pages of a book, a library-borrower puts it aside, it should not count as "a dab in the hand" for its author. On the same principle, if, after five hours, he decided that he did not wish to remain in a holiday cottage which he had rented, would he expect to be let off the payment agreed?

As the drafter of the Bill in question, Godfrey Carter might have been better advised – like a cook whose preparation of meals-on-wheels results in widespread food-poisoning – to keep quiet about it. He concludes his letter "Quite clever, really." Quite silly, really.

FRANCIS KING.
19 Gordon Place, London W8.

Copyright

Sir, – In their article "Copyrights and wrongs: D. H. Lawrence" (September 3), Michael Holroyd and Sandra Jobson revive by implication the ancient slander that my father, John Middleton Murry, and Frieda Lawrence between them "cooked" Lawrence's lost will. The facts are as follows. In 1914 Lawrence, Frieda, Katherine Mansfield and my father were staying in Buckinghamshire. My father and Lawrence were both expecting to serve in the War. They decided to make their wills and the documents were executed in identical language, both men sitting at opposite sides of the same table. Lawrence left his entire estate to Frieda, my father left his to Katherine. Each couple then witnessed the other's will. Lawrence believed that this will was still valid and in existence because he asked about it three days before his death in 1930.

Lord Merrivale heard the case (for revoking the letters of administration originally granted jointly to Frieda and Lawrence's brother George) in the Probate Court on November 2, 1932. He pronounced in favour of the will of 1914 and granted to Frieda new letters of administration with the will attached. He also commented that the terms of the settlement – £500 each for Lawrence's brother and two sisters – were generous.

My father's evidence in court amounted to a recital under oath of the facts which I have given here.

COLIN MIDDLETON MURRY.
Landscott, Lower Street, Dittisham, nr Dartmouth, Devon.

Sir, – The fate of the Auden copyrights is not quite what Michael Holroyd and Sandra Jobson describe in their article "Copyrights and wrongs: D. H. Lawrence" (September 3). Auden did, as they report, leave his copyrights to his friend Chester Kallman. When Kallman died sixteen months later, he had not written a new will to replace an old one in which he had bequeathed everything to Auden. His estate therefore passed to his nearest surviving relation, his father, Dr Edward Kallman. Friends of Dr Kallman will be relieved to learn that Mr Holroyd and Ms Jobson's report of his death is not supported by the evidence. He is as witty and vigorous as ever, and he looks forward to celebrating his ninety-fifth birthday in a few months' time.

EDWARD MENDELSON.
Department of English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University, New York, NY 10027.

Sir, – Michael Holroyd and Sandra Jobson (September 3) having thought fit to involve me in the D. H. Lawrence copyright issue, may I for what it is worth state my position in my own terms?

Several months ago and without prior warning, unconcerned with local meal times as with the mysteries of the spelling of my name, Mrs Jobson interrupted my lunch with a long telephone call and talked at length on this subject, openly inviting a protest on my part on the copyright question. Needless to say I would have appreciated the courtesy of a draft for approval of the statements attributed to me.

I have every sympathy with the aims of Cambridge University Press in trying to establish a definitive text of Lawrence's writing, and I fully appreciate the magnitude and pitfalls of the task. My main fear indeed is that the immense complexity of showing in a single volume, eg, the variants of *Women in Love* or the two versions of *The Plumed Serpent*, may defeat the most ingenious editors and printers. The work done by CUP on Lawrence's *Letters* so far is invaluable in that it is as nearly complete as can be, and that for the first time the correspondence can be read in time sequence.

Some novels, such as *The Lost Girl* or *The White Peacock*, present limited editorial problems. In no case can scarcely be justified by the correction of printers' errors, punctuation or even the restoration of minor cuts or emendations made by Lawrence to satisfy the prudery or caution of his publisher. *Women in Love*, with its two typescripts and two or three "first" editions, and *The Plumed Serpent* as well as *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, raise other problems and nobody can object to newly published substantial passages being copyrighted for the first time.

The question I thought Mrs Jobson raised with me was that of penalizing scholars who need to quote Lawrence in academic studies. To this my answer would be:

1 Quote in all cases from authentic first editions;
2 No permission from Messrs Pollinger will be required, the copyright in those editions having lapsed;
3 If relevant to the particular subject treated, quote under the "fair usage" rule from the texts now or in future made available by Cambridge University Press or any other edition;
4 If these quotations are necessarily substantial ask for permission in the usual way.

While nobody will quarrel with Gerald Pollinger's anxiety to protect the interests of the Weekley-Ravagli inheritors, and incidentally his own, I feel sure that he would not unreasonably withhold permission for scholarly use of the newly published texts. I have always found him and his father reasonable in this respect.

I hope my many friends now editing Lawrence's works will be duly rewarded for their efforts and scholarship. But does their work justify a fifty years' prolongation of copyright for the texts now out of copyright? How are the interests of the common reader to be protected? Many will be grateful to Michael Holroyd and Sandra Jobson for raising the question. In my experience some Lawrence manuscripts, such as that of *Sons and Lovers* at Berkeley, were all too long withheld even from the sight, let alone the use, of scholars for copyright, ie, commercial, reasons, unworthy of a seat of high learning. The new Cambridge edition should make research easier, not more difficult or onerous.

EMILE DELAVENAY.
Val de Cagne, 455 Chemin de Galiniers, Malbosquet, 06140 Vence, France.

Among this week's contributors

ROSEMARY ASHTON's *The German Idea: Four English Writers and the Reception of English Thought 1800–1860* was published in 1980.

PEARL K. BELL was until recently a regular reviewer of fiction for *Commentary*.

BRIAN BOND's most recent book is *British Military Policy between the Two World Wars*, 1980.

JOHN CANNON's edition of *The Letters of Junius* was published in 1978.

BARRY CUNLIFFE's books include *Hengistbury Head*, 1978.

C. J. FULLER is a lecturer in Anthropology at the London School of Economics. His *The Nayars Today* was published in 1976.

E. N. FURBANK's books include *E. M. Forster: A Life*, 1977 and 1978.

ROBIN GARETT's collections of poems include *West of Elan*, 1975.

HENRY GIFFORD's *Pasternak: a Critical Study* was published in 1977.

PATRICIA HIGHSMITH's books include *Little Tales of Misogyny*, 1977.

MICHAEL HOWARD is Regius Professor of Modern History at the University of Oxford.

SIR EDMUND LEACH's books include *Culture and Communication*, 1976.

GERVEL LINDOP is a lecturer in English at the University of Manchester.

PIERS MACKESY's *The Coward of Minden: the Affair of Lord George Sackville* was published in 1979.

CYRIL MANGO's books include *Byzantium*, 1980.

KENNETH O. MORGAN's most recent book is *Rebirth of a Nation: Wales 1880–1980*, 1981.

S. J. NEWMAN is a lecturer in English at the University of Liverpool.

M. F. PERUTZ is a Nobel Laureate in Chemistry. He was the founder and for seventeen years the Chairman of MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology in Cambridge.

J. R. POLE's most recent book is *Paths to the American Past*, 1980.

ROBIN ROBBINS edited the Oxford English Texts of Sir Thomas Browne's *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*.

NICK RODDICK is lecturer in Drama at the University of Manchester.

CAROL RUMENS's most recent collection of poems is *Unplayed Music*, 1981.

S. SCHOENBAUM's books include *William Shakespeare: a Documentary Life*, 1981.

CLIVE SINCLAIR's most recent collection of stories *Bed Bugs* was published earlier this year.

MICHAEL TANNER is a lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Cambridge.

J. A. THOMPSON is a Fellow of St Catherine's College, Cambridge.

ROBERT TOWLER is a lecturer in Sociology at the University of Leeds.

J. F. WATKINS is Professor of Medical Microbiology at the Welsh National School of Medicine.

GEORGE WATSON is a Fellow of St John's College, Cambridge. He is editor of the *New Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature*, 1981.

CEDRIC V. WATTS is the editor of *Selected Writings of Cunninghame Graham*, 1981.

C. M. WOODHOUSE's autobiography, *Something Ventured*, was published earlier this year.

Author, Author

Competition No 89

Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office not later than October 15. A prize of £10 is offered for the first correct set of answers opened on that date, or failing that the most nearly correct – in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration.

Entries, marked "Author, Author 89" on the envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX. The solution and results will appear on October 22.

1 All shod with steel,
We hissed along the polished ice in games
Confederate . . .

2 O'er crackling ice, o'er gulphs profound,
With nimble glide the skaiters play:
O'er treacherous pleasure's flow'ry ground
Thus lightly skim, and haste away.

3 All the time they seemed to be skating on bithomless depths of air, so blue the ice had become; and so glassy smooth was it that they sped quicker, and quicker to the city with the white gulls circling about them and cutting in the air with their wings the very same sweeps that they cut on the ice with their skates.

Competition No 85

Winner; Martin Geeson
Answers:

1 She lifted the lobster clear of the table. It had about thirty seconds to live.

Well, thought Belacqua, it's a quick death, God help us all.
It is not.
Samuel Beckett, "Dante and the Lobster".

2 . . . the film returned to its place – the pulse fluttered – stopped – went on – throbbed – stopped again – moved – stopped – shall I go on?

No.
Laurence Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*, VI, 10.

3 "Not about a motor-cycle?"
"No."
"One with overhead valves and a dynamo for light? Or with racing handle-bars?"
"No."
Flann O'Brien, *The Third Policeman*.

to the editor

'Edmund Ironside'

Sir, – I'm grateful for the interest shown in my "Edmund Ironside" article (August 13). May I first mention a few corrigenda? Col 3, line 12, read "such" for "other"; col 5, line 31, "honours" for "humours"; line 10 from the end, before "can" insert "was owned by Shakespeare, share writings which on good evidence . . ." I'd welcome further comments and criticisms to help with the *Ironside* edition I'm preparing, for publication by Junction Books.

Predictably, the *TLS* post was a mixed bag. Some saw interest, excellent evidence, even fundamental importance; others only ignorance and error. Time may tell; it has taken the *Thomas More* fragment over a century to attain its present grudging and challenged acceptance. Meanwhile I'm grateful to Robert F. Fleissner (September 3) for his measure of support, though some of his comments confirm my fear that I tried to pack too much into a short piece. On his factual question, I've sent him a select bibliography of suggestions that the 1589 *Hamlet* may well have been Shakespeare's own; its most recent item is Nigel Alexander's Macmillan edition of 1973 (pp 14–15).

Paul Xuereb (September 3): By the "classical" Hecuba I meant the Queen of Troy, at its fall. In *Ironside* (line 1481) she "ran mad for sorrow", unable to express her grief by weeping. In *Titus* too she "ran mad for sorrow" (IV.i.21); the tongueless Lavinia has just entered running. In *Hamlet*, Hecuba runs up and down in Troy. Xuereb's feeling that this running image may derive from the post-Troy ex-queen character's words in the static set-speech play of *The Trojan Women* seems to rest solely on his own word "presumably". This is not to deny, though, that there is much identifiable Seneca in both *Titus* and *Ironside*, just as (Nashe suggests) in the early *Hamlet*, and as one might expect if the same hand wrote all three, *c* 1589.

MacD. P. Jackson (September 10): I was encouraged by his view in earlier correspondence that *Ironside* may possibly be early Shakespeare. But I think he seriously underrates the strength of Kenneth Muir's image-cluster arguments for the same view of *Edward III*, which has now I believe been confirmed by Eliot Slater's recent thesis as very probably from Shakespeare's hand throughout. I was particularly sorry to lack space for that topic, because any careful reader can identify the many striking affinities between *Edward III* and *Ironside*. It is disappointing that Slater's supervisor, of all people, has failed to draw the obvious inference.

I fear that Richard Proudfoot's wish to refute (September 17) has run away with him, and that it is he who is "mistaken on all counts". He confuses the Archbishop of Canterbury with the Bishop of London. He claims that Eleanor Boswell "showed in her introduction that the [*Ironside*] manuscript must be a scribal copy". But she didn't; she just *said* it was (1927, p vi). Here the unhappy history of these studies repeats itself; groundless assertion is announced as ascertained fact. Everitt showed, ie by actual argument, that it is *not* a scribal copy (1954, pp 57–59, to which I have plenty to add). Next "the hand shows none of the characteristics of the authentic signatures of Shakespeare or of the celebrated 'Hand D' pages in *The Book of Sir Thomas More*." But it does; Everitt specifies *thirty-five* of them (ibid, pp 102–12, and again I can add others). Nor does Sams even refer to the exhaustive descriptive analyses of that hand by Sir E. Maunde Thompson". But to do, by citing his 1916 book on that topic, "Canute's laws . . . are hardly [the] 'chief contents' of *Archaeonomia*. But they are; in a book of regal statutes, Canute's predominate. Furthermore, it is indeed that source and not Holinshed that links mutilation with lasting infamy; I'm obliged for that point. "Holinshed's *Chronicle of England* (1587) . . . supplies all the history to be found in the play". But it doesn't; Grafton is also a source (and why not 1577?). "It is hard to resist the thought that *Ironside* may be" indebted to *Richard II*. But that "thought" just begs the question, which is not whether to resist it but how to justify it. The nearest approach to that is the curious notion that 1595–99 seem likelier limits for *Ironside* than 1587–88 because it "recalls another history play of unknown authorship and disputed date".

Now let's consult the authorities. Not only Everitt but Hart (1942) gives 1587 as a possible limit for *Ironside*, while Boas (1923), Dodds (1924) and Ribner (1957) all argue for a date of *c* 1590. The evidence of diction and vocabulary, carefully checked by hundreds of *OED* citations, points clearly to the later 1580s. On what verifiable factual grounds does Richard Proudfoot base his conjectured 1595–99?

ERIC SAMS.
32 Arundel Avenue, Sanderstead, Surrey.

'Accents of English'

Sir, – I'm surprised that Robert Burchfield in his review (August 20) of J. C. Wells's *Accents of English* should say that "R Insertion" (*near us, far away*) leads to the intrusive *r* of *awe/r/inspiring*.

Surely those of us (especially Scots and Welsh) who go in for "R Insertion" are the ones who *don't* employ the intrusive "r". Conversely, Southern Englishmen who use the intrusive "r" all the time can't manage "R Insertion" at all: instead of the "r" in *near us* they use a kind of glottal stop.

ELWYN EVANS.
Authors' Club, 40 Dover Street, London W1.

Milton in Russia

Sir, – "Giving *Paradise Lost* to the peasants" is the title of Henry Gifford's review of a recent Soviet anthology of English verse (August 13). If irony was intended it is based on Gifford's own error in associating Maurice Baring with a literary anachronism this distinguished English authority on Russia would never have made. It is perfectly true, of course, that when Baring visited that country he was astonished to find "*Paradise Lost* translated into simple prose [being] sold in cheap editions, with coloured pictures, all over Russia, and greedily read by the peasants . . .". Baring reported this in his *Landmarks in Russian Literature* (1910), and the story has since become part of the lore about Milton in Russia. Yet your reviewer inserts a gloss of his own to the Baring quotation by referring to "Books I–III by Petrov in 1777".

Any friend of the peasants reading your review may wonder why these primitive beings were reduced under the Tsarist régime to reading so ancient a translation. Worse, did they find *Paradise Lost* such hard going that they abandoned it with Book III? Maurice Baring argued that "very great art" (he cites Homer, Shakespeare, Dante, Beethoven and Mozart next to Milton) appeals to all classes of society, "to the specialist and to the most uncultivated ignoramus". The Russian career of *Paradise Lost* would suggest that he was right, even though Vasilii Petrov's partial translation of 1777 has relatively little to do with it.

His translation, probably begun five years earlier in England (while Petrov was consorting with the bigamous Duchess of Kingston), has no ponderate. Furthermore, it is indeed links mutilation with lasting infamy; I'm obliged for that point. "Holinshed's *Chronicle of England* (1587) . . . supplies all the history to be found in the play". But it doesn't; Grafton is also a source (and why not 1577?). "It is hard to resist the thought that *Ironside* may be" indebted to *Richard II*. But that "thought" just begs the question, which is not whether to resist it but how to justify it. The nearest approach to that is the curious notion that 1595–99 seem likelier limits for *Ironside* than 1587–88 because it "recalls another history play of unknown authorship and disputed date".

Now let's consult the authorities. Not only Everitt but Hart (1942) gives 1587 as a possible limit for *Ironside*, while Boas (1923), Dodds (1924) and Ribner (1957) all argue for a date of *c* 1590. The evidence of diction and vocabulary, carefully checked by hundreds of *OED* citations, points clearly to the later 1580s. On what verifiable factual grounds does Richard Proudfoot base his conjectured 1595–99?

ERIC SAMS.
32 Arundel Avenue, Sanderstead, Surrey.

'Accents of English'

Sir, – I'm surprised that Robert Burchfield in his review (August 20) of J. C. Wells's *Accents of English* should say that "R Insertion" (*near us, far away*) leads to the intrusive *r* of *awe/r/inspiring*.

Surely those of us (especially Scots and Welsh) who go in for "R Insertion" are the ones who *don't* employ the intrusive "r". Conversely, Southern Englishmen who use the intrusive "r" all the time can't manage "R Insertion" at all: instead of the "r" in *near us* they use a kind of glottal stop.

ELWYN EVANS.
Authors' Club, 40 Dover Street, London W1.

Milton in Russia

Sir, – "Giving *Paradise Lost* to the peasants" is the title of Henry Gifford's review of a recent Soviet anthology of English verse (August 13). If irony was intended it is based on Gifford's own error in associating Maurice Baring with a literary anachronism this distinguished English authority on Russia would never have made. It is perfectly true, of course, that when Baring visited that country he was astonished to find "*Paradise Lost* translated into simple prose [being] sold in cheap editions, with coloured pictures, all over Russia, and greedily read by the peasants . . .". Baring reported this in his *Landmarks in Russian Literature* (1910), and the story has since become part of the lore about Milton in Russia. Yet your reviewer inserts a gloss of his own to the Baring quotation by referring to "Books I–III by Petrov in 1777".

Any friend of the peasants reading your review may wonder why these primitive beings were reduced under the Tsarist régime to reading so ancient a translation. Worse, did they find *Paradise Lost* such hard going that they abandoned it with Book III? Maurice Baring argued that "very great art" (he cites Homer, Shakespeare, Dante, Beethoven and Mozart next to Milton) appeals to all classes of society, "to the specialist and to the most uncultivated ignoramus". The Russian career of *Paradise Lost* would suggest that he was right, even though Vasilii Petrov's partial translation of 1777 has relatively little to do with it.

His translation, probably begun five years earlier in England (while Petrov was consorting with the bigamous Duchess of Kingston), has no ponderate. Furthermore, it is indeed that source and not Holinshed that

Melodramas for soprano

Michael Tanner

William Ashbrook
Donizetti and his Operas
744pp. Cambridge University Press. £25.
0 521 23526 X

While it is impossible to take the operas of Donizetti entirely seriously, they and their recent revival do raise entirely serious questions. In her famous and very helpful article "Notes on 'Camp' ", Susan Sontag places Bellini's operas among the "canon of camp", but she got her bel canto composer wrong. Bellini's finest works can and should be taken as seriously as they are intended, and there is a strong case for saying that *Norma* is the greatest of Italian operas. It is a work of nobility and high seriousness, which moves inevitably towards a wholly convincing tragic denouement; and, thanks to the genius of Maria Callas, we now know that no allowances have to be made for it.

It was Callas who was also responsible for the major re-entry of Donizetti into the operatic repertoire – only *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Don Pasquale* and *L'Elisir d'Amore*, of the many operas in his unbelievably huge output, had always maintained their place. She was only actively involved in the revival of two of them, but the decisive event was the production of *Anna Bolena* at La Scala in 1957. Because it is so powerful a work when judiciously pruned of, among other things, its Overture, and because it had been neglected for so long, it seemed reasonable to expect that many of Donizetti's other works would prove to be as fine. In fact none of them has, but with sixty-five to seventy to explore (the indeterminacy comes from Donizetti's extensive reworkings of many of his scores, such as *Poliuto* into *Les Martyrs*, which may or may not be counted as two operas) who can tell whether another near-masterpiece will emerge? Hence one reason for the annual disinterment of three or four further works, the establishment of a Donizetti Society in London with a book-length journal which appears every two years or so, the concert performances of Opera Rara followed often by recordings, the enormous proliferation of "private" or pirated recordings of Italian performances, and so on.

Nevertheless, even at his finest, generous allowances must be made for Donizetti – with the exception of his comedies. The element of the absurd is always a little too close to be unembarrassing, even to audiences trained in the varied preposterousnesses of opera. The same goes for the vast majority of Verdi's output, much of it scarcely distinguishable from Donizetti. But at the moment Verdi can do no wrong, so that even ineptities like *Attila* have to be taken with a straight face. No doubt that is partly due to the undeniable greatness of his last works, which are used to browbeat into submission doubters about the larger part of his work.

Of course the people who travel huge distances to "collect" performances of *Maria di Rudenz* or *Pousta* at La Fenice or in Rome take them seriously, and William Ashbrook has produced a book which, admirable as it is, will bore them while they say that it is indispensable. But who are these people? They constitute a strikingly different audience from those for whom the operas were originally intended: the Italian opera-going public – drawn from all classes – of the first half of the nineteenth century. They are the international set of opera queens, who find Mozart insufficiently spectacular vocally and Wagner, naturally, a bore, and whose primary joy is to worship and applaud the soprano who are the *relais d'être* of most of Donizetti's melodramas. The enormous appeal of these singers – Callas supremely, but also her great successor Leyla Gencer, and the acclaimed Sutherland, Sills, Caballé and Ricciarelli – for many male homosexuals is a phenomenon as undeniable as it is officially ignored. These divas fascinate the same people who maintain cult of Garbo and Bette Davis, but the more glamorous ambience in which their performances occur gives them added snob-appeal.

What draws their special audiences, as opposed to regular opera-goers, is that they are emphatically melodrama, not tragedy, where melodrama can be defined as the camp relation of tragedy. The subjects of both are often identical, but as the Marschallin puts it in *Der Rosenkavalier*, "in dem 'Wie', da liegt der ganze Unterschied". A mad heroine who voices her insanity in a prolonged duet, or duel, with a flute, cannot be taken *wholly* in earnest, even if she sings with the extraordinary curdled pathos of Callas.

It is an essential feature of Donizetti's works that they draw attention to the virtuosity of their performers, and though that by itself would not constitute camp, if the difficulty of what is being sung is foremost in the listener's mind, when the subject – insanity, rage, vengeance, enormously protracted death – is so intrinsically serious, the result undeniably will be camp. That is why, conversely, Donizetti's comedies are not camp; it is natural for youthful high spirits, hilarity and mockery to express themselves, operatically, in trills, successions of scales and roulades, and so it seems perfectly appropriate and therefore unaffected. One might say that, since operatic singing almost always tends towards the strenuously athletic, all opera tends towards the condition of camp, though the greatest operas certainly transcend it.

The question remains as to why, in Donizetti, it should be the soprano who is so evidently put through her paces; and the answer no doubt partly lies in the early Romantic sensibility, with its stress on tormented and shockingly maltreated women, who may be expected to express themselves more acrobatically than stoically suffering men (the most serious music in *Lucia* is for Edgardo, after Lucia herself has left the scene). The further question of why opera queens are so turned on by these queens of the operatic stage could only be answered fully by some as yet (so far as I am aware) totally unresearched depth psychology. If, as has sometimes been suggested, male homosexuals are in some way afraid of women, then the beginnings of an answer may be that figures such as Callas, who incarnate so perfectly a certain ideal of feminity, offer many of the gratifications without any of the envisaged threats of womanhood. They offer tenderness, excitement, sensuality, even scorn and vehemence, but without any requirement of an active response. The ideal of femininity presented is no doubt a dated one, offensive to many contemporary sensibilities. But it is comprehensible that it should be welcomed and celebrated.

These speculations are made in no hostile spirit towards Donizetti, his interpreters, or his and their admirers. It is, on the other hand, perfectly understandable that such matters should find no place in William Ashbrook's very large book. He has provided what is best seen as a work of reference; it scarcely replaces, though in many ways it improves upon, the critical biography which he produced in 1965, and which can much more easily be read straight through. The other large book on Donizetti in English, by Herbert Weinstock, can safely be ignored. The new book neglects altogether Donizetti's non-operatic works, which amount to a good deal, though not enough for a further book; so that it might have been worth while to discuss the considerable number of far from negligible piano pieces, both for two and four hands, the chamber works, the songs and cantatas, and especially the very moving and powerful Requiem in memory of Bellini, of which there is an admirable pirate recording under the arch-Donizettian Gianandrea Gavazzeni (the piano music has been recorded complete by RCA).

The structure of Ashbrook's book unfortunately necessitates a good deal of repetition. The 200-odd pages that comprise Part One are devoted to Donizetti's life, but since it was rather short – he became syphilitically insane at the age of forty-eight – the account of it naturally consists largely of the composition of his operas, referring to them often in a fair amount of detail in order to explain why, at the behest of conceited singers, exigent impresarios, varying national and even regional tastes, and the scarcely credible rigours of censorship, Donizetti was obliged to cast them in the form he did. Part Two, more than 300 pages, is the valuable core of the book, dealing conscientiously with all of the operas, with the aid of 100 musical examples, superbly printed in vocal score, and including a welcome number of value-judgments, which become increasingly and interestingly more forceful, and in some cases tart, as the accounts proceed. Donizetti's last opera, *Dom Sébastien*, receives twenty-two pages of treatment, and is pronounced his masterpiece. It has been oddly neglected, revived only in its Italian version and in mutilated form for the Maggio Musicale in 1955 under Giulini (there is a pirated recording available). Then follow fifty pages in tiny print of plot summaries of all the operas, whether finished or not, about which I feel exactly as I do about the synopses which precede opera broadcasts on Radio Three: superfluous for those who already know the works, useless for those who don't (Have we got to Aurelio's nightmare yet?). There is hefty documentation and the by now typically infuriating section of notes (over 100 pages) which range from simple page-references to extended items of further information, with no means of knowing, from the main text, which it will be.



Joan Sutherland bombarded with daffodils after her performance in the title role of Donizetti's Lucrezia Borgia; *the picture, with other rehearsal stills, is included in* The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden *by Clive Boursnell and Colin Thubron, with a foreword by the Prince of Wales, to be published on September 27 (256pp. Hamish Hamilton. £20.00. 0 241 10891 8). The book aims to explain, through essays and pictures, the working life of the Opera House in all its aspects.*

For someone who has devoted such an amount of energy to his subject Ashbrook is remarkably modest in his estimates of Donizetti's *oeuvre*. He diligently lists the flaws in each work, and rarely makes big claims. The odd moments of special pleading are all the more obtrusive. Seeking to defend Donizetti against one apparent *paria's* music could fit without strain into such diverse contexts as *Il diluvio*, *Anna Bolena*, *Tasso* and *Le duc d'Alba* testifies to a greater consistency in Donizetti's style than has usually been granted". Given that the four works cited are so strikingly different in subject-matter, it might be felt that rather than being congratulated on his consistency, Donizetti should be rebuked for his inflexibility and generalized idiom. Again, because in *Torquato Tasso* Donizetti deals with the subject of the artist as hero, Ashbrook writes that it is "in the same category, if not quite in the same league, as operas such as *Benvenuto Cellini* and *Die Meistersinger*" – two grotesque judgments encapsulated in one brief clause. And in his discussion of *Poliuto* and its French re-working *Les Martyrs*, Ashbrook concludes that the former will appeal more to "an adherent of the values of Romantic melodrama", while "a mystic will find *Les Martyrs* more to his taste". I would be profoundly suspicious of a mystic, at least one on duty, who found any of Donizetti to his taste.

More generally, I would have welcomed a final chapter in which Ashbrook attempted an overview of Donizetti's *oeuvre*, an indication of his place in the history of opera, and especially a more detailed account of the differences between him and the still easily confused, though in reality radically different, genius of Bellini. Essentially they are no more alike than Haydn and Mozart. On the other hand, the extreme closeness of much of Verdi's work to Donizetti might have been stressed, to the benefit of the latter; and more should have been said about the differences between Rossini's dazzling and heartless comedies and Donizetti's comparative warmth. None the less, the book is clearly destined to be the classic work on its subject, almost worthy, as is apt, to stand beside Julian Budden's three volumes on Verdi.

Admirers of operatic superstars may wish to demonstrate their savoir by answering the more trivial of the questions in James Camner's *The Operatic Quiz Book* (125pp. Robson Books. £5.95. 0 86051 174 X). For instance: what great Wagnerian soprano once played the unlikely part of the castrato Farinelli in an opera? When you rang the doorbell at Elsa Pinza's house, what did you hear? What prima donna took curtain calls with a goose under her arm? Or, perhaps less easily verifiable, who was the shortest ever Aida? These and 409 other posers are subdivided into sections on Stars, Houses, Composers and Operetta, as well as the necessary miscellaneous section, which includes equally pointless questions.

Constant shock-waves

Patrick O'Connor

Preben Opperby
Leopold Stokowski
288pp. Midas Books. £12.50.
0 85936 251 1

Stokowski, you may remember, was the only human being to appear with Mickey Mouse on the screen; his Hollywood career, which also took in an appearance with Deanna Durbin and an over-publicized friendship with Garbo, increased his reputation among music critics as a vulgarian. The look of surprise on a soprano soloist's face during a concert performance of Brünnhilde's Immolation Scene when he brought in the double-force harps is just one of hundreds of anecdotes about the flouting of good taste which was his joy and part of his popular appeal. What needs to be remembered too, however, is that he was a pioneer of modern music and a champion of young composers from Stravinsky (Stokowski conducted the American concert and stage premières of *The Rite of Spring*) to Ned Rorem and many others. The list of first performances that he conducted occupies fourteen pages in Preben Opperby's book.

The book is exact in such detail, but Opperby groups his chapters under headings, so that we read a monotonous account of the politics surrounding the leadership succession of the various American orchestras with which Stokowski was associated at various points in his career. This might have made amusing reading but most of the ups and downs of fortune are dismissed in brief telegram-like statements. The Second World War comes and is gone in a single sentence. "His life was often in danger when the Germans bombed trains in which he was trying to escape the country." It comes also as something of a surprise to read that when Stokowski threatened to resign from the Philadelphia Orchestra in 1933 it gave "a shock to the whole musical world". The shock-waves from elsewhere that year must have made many other baton hands tremble.

A chapter of anecdotes about Stokowski's dealings with players and some of his sayings, and another called "Stokowski the Man" might have been broken up and fitted in to enliven these endless wranglings. The main point of this book is obviously Opperby's studious collection of information about Stokowski's career and the lists of his performances and gramophone records which will no doubt be of use to future scholars and biographers.

The usurper's chapel

Cyril Mango

Cecil L. Striker
The Myrelaion (Bodrum Camli) in Istanbul
134pp. including 84 black-and-white illustrations. Guildford: Princeton University Press. £26.50.
0 691 03546 6

The determined tourist intent on visiting the lesser Byzantine monuments of Istanbul may have some trouble in finding the Myrelaion (Bodrum Camli), the private church built by the usurper Romanus Lecapenus in about 920. It used to be a conspicuous landmark – a burnt-out shell set on a hillock in the midst of an overgrown open space. Today, however, it is surrounded by dingy blocks of flats and practically invisible except from the west. More disastrously, nearly the entire structure was refaced with modern brick in 1964–65 in an ill-considered attempt at conservation. What was once a picturesque ruin can now only be described as a mess.

Next to the Myrelaion one can make out the lower portion of an immense fifth-century rotunda that was excavated by the German Archaeological Institute in 1965–66. The rotunda was evidently derelict when Romanus Lecapenus acquired possession of it. He levelled it to a uniform height, turned the interior into a vaulted cistern and built upon it his mansion of which only the foundations have been recovered. The Myrelaion, which was intended to serve as the house chapel, had to be raised to the same height as the mansion and was accordingly provided with a tall substructure of the same dimensions and disposition as the church above it. Eventually the whole complex was turned into a nunnery and several members of the Lecapenus family were buried in it.

At the same time that the Germans were conducting their excavation of the rotunda, Cecil L. Striker carried out a more modest operation, which was to clear the substructure of the church of some 3.5 m of earth-fill. The findings he made, while not devoid of interest, could adequately have been presented in a ten-page article. They are that the substructure was not originally meant for either ecclesiastical or funerary use; that the church was burnt in about 1200 (most probably in the great fire of 1203) and that a mass of débris, including small architectural fragments and bits of ceramic revetment tiles, was later dumped into the substructure to a depth of about 1.5 m. Upon this deposit a brick floor was laid in *c* 1300 and the space was used for burials; above one of which was found a fragmentary painting of a deceased woman kneeling in front of the Virgin Mary.

These discoveries represent the original contribution made by Professor Striker to the study of the Myrelaion. The greater part of his slender book is, however, devoted to a somewhat arid discussion of the architecture of the church, illustrated by a set of drawings whose number (thirty-two) strikes me as excessive for a building of small size, standard plan and uncomplicated structural history. He has nothing new to say about the history of the monument or the medieval topography of that part of Constantinople in which the Myrelaion stood. But then it seems that the reading of Greek and Latin sources is not Striker's forte. The one time he ventures to give a Latin quotation (from the sixteenth-century French traveller Pierre Gilles) he commits five errors in one sentence, making the passage completely unintelligible. In view of the fact that not many readers are likely to have Gilles's *De topographia Constantinopoleos* within easy reach, and since the identification of the Bodrum Camii with the Myrelaion rests on this very passage, it may be helpful to quote it correctly:

> Supra hortorum Blanchae nuncupatorum, olim portum [*not* portam] Theodosiacum continentium extremam partem ad ortum solis pertinentem clivus a [*not* ad] septentrione eminet, in quo est templum vulgo nominatum Myreleos, habens intra se cisternam cuius camera lateritia [*not* lateritatia] sustinetur columnis marmoreis circiter sexaginta, ubi horreum olim fuit, quot [*not* quod] depravate [*not* depravatem] Suydas appellat horeium.

The sad fate of the Myrelaion naturally prompts one to think about the survival of the Byzantine monuments of Istanbul. The three-star monuments, like St Sophia and the Kariye Camii, receive some, though not always adequate, care and the churches that have been turned into mosques are relatively safe. But what of the rest? To quote but a few examples, the mosaic pavement of the Great Palace is falling to pieces, the nave of the venerable basilica of St Mary Chalcoprateia has been converted into a parking-lot, the maritime walls of the city are being progressively demolished, while those of the Blachernae quarter, once so picturesque, have been partly enclosed by a depot for packing-cases. I am not unaware of the immense economic problems that Turkey has to face today nor do I wish to imply that the Turkish Antiquities Service has not had its share of dedicated men and women who have bravely struggled within their limited means to preserve what they could. A concerted effort is, however, urgently required both on the part of the Turkish authorities and of international bodies to save a diminishing heritage.

The rise and fall of Britannia

Barry Cunliffe

John Morris
Londinium: London in the Roman Empire
Revised by Sarah Macready
384pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £15.
0 297 78093 X

Roman London has frequently found itself presented to the public in book form, for the very good reason that the archaeology of the city, exposed in building works, is constantly beneath the noses of a large section of our population and, as the heritage of our capital city, it has rightly been the subject of extensive (and expensive) campaigns of excavation. The potential richness of the City first became established in the nineteenth century, but the first systematic rescue work was not carried out until, under Mortimer Wheeler's direction in the 1930s, the London Museum appointed a series of young men to record what was being destroyed and where possible to carry out limited rescue excavations.

The devastation of the last war cleared much of the nucleus of the ancient centre, presenting an archaeological problem as exciting as it was frightening. Limited funds and lack of a properly trained staff meant that much was lost to the developers' bulldozers but a great deal of new information was gleaned and the temple of Mithras showed an excited public that archaeology could be entertaining – it also demonstrated to property developers that, as the destroyers of our heritage, they had a responsibility to help provide for the proper recording of anything archaeological that lay in their way.

The post-war experience paved the way for the creation of the Museum of London's Department of Urban Archaeology, a professional organization charged to rescue what is left of London's below-ground heritage before the present wave of redevelopment sweeps away the last vestiges. Its successes are well publicized and its work is thorough, as anyone visiting their current excavations at Billingsgate is well able to see.

It is against this background of intense and continuous archaeological activity, punctuated at regular intervals by the appearance of yet another book on Roman London, that John Morris's *Londinium* must be judged. Morris began writing in 1967 and had completed the first draft in the early 1970s, sporadically revising it up to 1975. When he died in 1977 his manuscript was almost complete. Now, five years later, after delicate and sympathetic editing by Sarah Macready, his work has been published. Simply told the story does not augur well for a volume dealing with such a rapidly expanding subject but all the originality of John Morris's brilliant mind is there to endow *Londinium* with a very distinctive quality.

The title is a little misleading. This not a book primarily about Roman London, but a highly entertaining account of the Roman province of Britannia, seen as an integral part of the Roman world, using some of the relevant evidence from London as illustrative material. The concept is an interesting one and the book must be judged a considerable success. One moment we are dealing with broad themes of Empire-wide importance, the next delving into the minutiae of some scrap of archaeological evidence. The agility of mind of the author and his skill in leading us effortlessly from one level to the other enliven rather than tire the reader.

Like all good archaeological works *Londinium* is divided into three parts. The first, "The Making of London", discusses the conquest of Britain; the conflict of Rome against the barbarians, and Roman attitudes towards administration and urbanization. It leads us through the turmoil of the first century AD to the consolidations of the Flavian Era by which time the structure and government of the province were firmly established. The second part, "Roman London", is rather more London-centred. We are shown how the city, as the prime seat of government, matured and how its citizens worked, fed and played. Finally, in the third part, "The Survival of London", we are back in a fast-moving story – the story of an Empire thrust on to inevitable destruction by dynamic processes it could not control. Our last vision is of London in the late sixth century emerging once more, this time as an English settlement under King Aethelbert.

The book was planned with great care to present a balanced picture of the Empire in terms of its citizens. There is no dogmatism, nor are there obtrusive value judgments. Yet even to a reader unaware of Morris's strongly held socialist views, it must be apparent that this was a work written by someone who, while caring passionately for the individual, understood the difficulties of those in power and had, if not a respect, at least a sympathy for the State. I do not wish to give the impression that this is a political book – it is not. It is a refreshing account of great and small events presented by someone who believed that politics can properly be learnt only through history.

Morris clearly set out to make archaeology and ancient history accessible. He assumes no previous knowledge but simply tells his story, pausing from time to time to expound the use of archaeological evidence or to explain a tricky point of interpretation – the use of Samian pottery for dating or the problems of using coin finds to throw light on the last few decades of Roman central government. The asides will be as helpful to the general reader as they are salutory to the professional archaeologist. *Londinium* has many merits. It is a firm reminder to archaeologists to rise above the mountains of potsherds and other rubbish, which so often obscure their vision, and to see the data they are studying in terms both of people and society. For the general reader it is a brilliant introduction to the world of archaeology. For John Morris's many friends it is a fitting memorial to a remarkable man.

The Life of John Berryman
JOHN HAFFENDEN
The life of John Berryman, one of the greatest post-war American poets, ran between the extremes of personal degradation and artistic ecstasy. This first major, authorized biography recounts in absorbing detail the public and private stages of Berryman's career.
9216 4 £15.00 30 September

Women of Ideas And What Men Have Done To Them
From Aphra Behn to Adrienne Rich
DALE SPENDER
Convincing evidence that women's absence from the record as creative intellectual beings is not women's fault, but men's.
9353 5 £11.95 22 September

Language and Literacy: The Selected Writings of Kenneth S Goodman
Volume 2: Reading, Language and the Classroom Teacher
Edited by FREDERICK V GOLLASCH
This volume contains works which focus on the applications of Professor Goodman's research and theory to teaching and learning. The book will be of immense practical value to teachers involved in the communication of literacy.
9005 6 £14.95 16 September

Burning Leaves
DON BANNISTER
Don Bannister's first two novels, *Sam Chard* and *Long Day at Shiloh* were received as quite exceptional books. His new novel, a journey through madness, will establish him as a novelist of the front rank.
9209 1 £6.95 9 September

The Facilitators
Or Mister Hole-in-the-Day
PETER REDGROVE
The new novel by 'a sorcerer who entices the mesmerised reader into the realms of magic and imagination. The reader is promptly inveigled into the extraordinary world of the occult by a plainness of approach that is in itself quite uncanny.' – Frank Rudman, *Spectator*
9218 4 £6.95 30 September

Pork
CRIS FREDDI
'Series of link stories about animals . . . studiously unromantic and sharply written' any idea of a return to the jungle as a kind of innocence is quickly dispelled . . . the woodland is as violent as any T.V. townscape.' – Norman Shrapnell, *Guardian*
9230 X £6.95 2 September

Arabian Essays
GHAZI ALGOSAIBI
Essays by this noted Middle Eastern statesman and poet bring a non-Western perspective to a range of current topics, both local and international.
Kegan Paul International 0 7103 0019 0 £9.50 2 September

Worldwide Family History
NOEL CURTIS-BRIGGS
This essential reference and guide for both amateur and professional genealogists sets out succinctly how people of English speech but foreign descent can begin tracing their ancestors.
0934 8 £9.95 9 September

The Book of Similes
ROBERT BALDWIN and RUTH PARIS
From the classic lines of Raymond Chandler to Clive James's latest gem. The aim is to give a phrase for every occasion and to describe all qualities – from the chasteness of Tallulah Bankhead ('I'm as pure as the driven slush') to the feeling of being attacked verbally by Sir Geoffrey Howe ('. . . like being savaged by a dead sheep'). . . .
9285 7 £6.95 paperback 9456 6 £4.50 30 September

ISBN prefix: 0 7100

Routledge & Kegan Paul
39 Store Street, London WC1

RKP

Factions, frictions and fever

Piers Mackesy

DAVID GEGGUS

Slavery, War, and Revolution: The British Occupation of Saint Domingue 1793–1798

492pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press. £28.
0 19 822634 9

The British occupation of Saint Domingue scorched the memories of the statesmen who organized it. Three years after the 1798 evacuation, when Henry Dundas was mounting the Egyptian expedition of 1801, a colleague told him in a Cabinet meeting that he had destroyed one army with yellow fever and was about to destroy another with the plague. The British army's historian Fortescue asserted that the secret of England's impotence in the French Revolutionary War lay "in the two fatal words, Saint Domingo".

It is surprising that David Geggus's book is the first close and scholarly study of an episode which looms so large in British history. It is a work of scholarly depth and sound judgment. His many revisions of received views are presented with prudence and good manners. The author has made his mark on the history of the Caribbean and of the Revolutionary Wars, and his work will be indispensable.

The occupation of Saint Domingue was a venture of a kind which no military commander then or since could approach without foreboding. The enemy were irregulars operating in impenetrable country, and the operations against them were based in a society where disunion, chaos and barbarism reigned. The white French inhabitants were split not only between republicans and royalists, but also between the people of property and the *petits blancs*, which was by no means the same distinction. The poor whites were torn between envy of their social superiors and fear of mulatto ascendancy. Brutal in defending their advantages over the free coloureds, they also boasted of the number of blacks they had shot. One can see the same phenomenon today in many parts of the world.

The free coloureds, who numbered about as many as the whites, were oppressed and dangerous. Oppressed by the French régime with legal restrictions and social stigmas, they were made dangerous by being singled out for a disproportionate share of compulsory security duties and military training. The whites and free coloureds together were outnumbered six or seven to one by slaves. These in turn were divided between native-born Creoles and newly arrived Africans, whose numbers were swelled by panic importations in response to the campaign against the slave trade. The Africans were more likely to run away, but were regarded as more loyal and docile than the skilled and "pretentious" Creoles. Whether the runaway slaves (the "maroons") were to be distinguished from brigands, and brigands from insurgents, is a question still debated by historians.

Such was the society, set amid plantations being progressively destroyed by the war, which the unfortunate British generals had to govern while they tried to fight the armed forces of the black hero Toussaint l'Ouverture. To reconcile the white planters to British rule there was even an attempt for a time to forego the powers of martial law and establish a civil administration. Inevitably this led to resentment about the choice of administrators. Firm Royalists, the "honnêtes gens", were furious to see fellow-travellers of the Revolution, "Royalistes depuis deux jours", promoted to high positions. There was predictable conflict between the military and the lawyers. The general had to cope with these frictions against a background of constant insurgent warfare, harassing of the bridgeheads and towns, raids on plantations, murders and reprisals. Such was the base from which he had to conduct his military operations; such the cause he was defending.

Thus there were elements in the society of the war-torn island which we can recognize today in southern Africa, the American South, and Vietnam, to name a few of our contemporary areas of conflict. The Vietnam image looms also in the military operations, though Castro's conquest of Cuba is geographically and racially closer. The British were drawn in at first in small numbers, when large numbers might have overwhelmed Toussaint's primitive forces. Eventually the numbers sucked in were very large indeed. The equivalent of about thirty regiments served in Saint Domingo, but too late. Toussaint had been given time to improve his forces and practise them in war till they became the well-trained demi-brigades which in due course withstood Napoleon's veterans.

Most of the British troops were new levies, poorly officered and disciplined, and few of their commanders were up to the complexity of their task. The huge area of operations meant that as sickness took its toll the troops had less and less time for rest, shelter and sleep, with an incessant round of guard duties in sweat-soaked clothing. It is for sickness that Saint Domingue is most remembered. The troops arrived in weak condition, often after suffering dysentery in camp in the Irish winter and typhus on the long voyage. They arrived in overcrowded coastal towns to be hit by malaria, the old scourge of West Indian campaigns. But worse, the 1790s saw a pandemic of yellow fever in the Caribbean. The cause is uncertain; perhaps a particularly deadly strain of virus, or exceptional weather. It may have been simply the influx of thousands of soldiers who had not been immunized by exposure to the disease, and the crowding in beleaguered towns where the natural water supply was cut off and *aedes aegypti* was encouraged to breed in artificial water containers.

The death rate was terrifying. In three months in the summer of 1794 two unacclimatized battalions had respectively 318 and 319 men dead in three months, and in the first year they buried three quarters of their strength. Another battalion was spared the first onset of the disease only to lose sixty per cent of its strength in eight weeks. There is no cure for yellow fever, and the troops took to drink to banish "the daily spectacle of death". Rum was believed to be a prophylactic, and they took to drunkenness in the fear that "a sober hour might give the Disease an Opportunity to attack". What alcohol really achieved was to hasten the liver and kidney failure from which death in yellow fever usually comes.

Why was this suffering necessary? The British intervened at the invitation of royalist (or at any rate anti-republican) French planters. In a half-hearted way the ministry hoped to expand the Caribbean empire. Later the old strategic argument for an aggressive defence of the British islands was used, strengthened by fear that the slave revolt would spread to neighbouring Jamaica unless it were contained. In none of their possible objects did the British succeed. They did not acquire Saint Domingue; they did not even acquire a wartime trade to sustain the financing of the war; they poured at least £7 million into the island for virtually no economic return. Jamaica was not made more secure; the failure to crush the Saint Domingun slave revolt "worsened the impact on the minds of Jamaica's slaves", and Jamaica was in fact secured by its own very large garrison. British intervention did not save the plantation régime.

In Geggus's judgment, however, the Saint Domingue adventure did not damage the British war effort as much as previous historians have believed. Fewer than 13,000 British troops lost their lives, and far more men were lost in the Windward Islands. Fortescue's figure of 100,000 casualties in the West Indies is, Geggus argues, grossly inflated. The financial cost fell far short of the £20 million – sometimes suggested.

Geggus tells his story with few concessions to the reader. Central characters such as Malouet and General Simcoe are not adequately identified. The chronology of the densely written narrative chapters is not made readily clear. Dreadful deeds are glanced over in a matter-of-fact manner which conceals the atrocious nature of the warfare. But he writes excellently, as one can see in his succinct description of life in the fort on the high mountain ridges. There the troops were free from the fever, dysentery and leg sores that plagued the soldiers in the plain. But "they had to endure extreme isolation, cut off from the coast by a landscape of huge chasms, plunging ravines and thick woods, where raiders could move freely. At 4,500 feet above the Artibonite, nights were chilly and deathly silent, a stark contrast to the steamy plains where insects droned incessantly."

Staying on top

John Cannon

IAN R. CHRISTIE

Wars and Revolutions: Britain 1760–1815

359pp. Edward Arnold. £17.50 (paperback, £6.95).
0 7131 6157 4

This is the sixth volume to be published in Arnold's "New History of England", with four more to come. It has already established itself as a valuable and successful series: the general editors have gone for experienced authors, and the books are attractively produced, with good, helpful bibliographies. *Wars and Revolutions* is another excellent example, both clear and readable.

One wonders whether the title is a perfect fit. Wars there certainly were in the period in question, and in abundance – the Seven Years' War, with which the volume begins; the War of American Independence; and the long haul of the wars against Revolutionary and Napoleonic France. But although there were also plenty of revolutions, they were not British ones – unless one wishes to surmise up the agricultural and industrial revolutions, terms which grow less and less apposite. It is doubtful whether the events in North America constituted a revolution at all, but, in any case, at three thousand miles' distance, there was little chance of the example proving contagious. As for the European revolutions of the period, the remarkable thing is that Britain did not have one, though at times it must have looked a close-run thing.

This is not a mere cavil, but draws attention to the difficulty of focusing Britain in the reign of George III. Compared with the gigantic convulsions on the Continent, it presents a country of tranquility and order; the rock on which resistance to subversion and change could be built. But placed in the context of British history, as the sequel to Walpole and the Hanoverian succession, it is a period of change, of the emergence of new forces and the decline of old ones. Christie uses as his organizing theme the problem of survival. There was little chance of Britain failing to survive in the fundamental sense – of following Poland and Venice into utter oblivion as states. The question was whether, after the heady and perhaps misleading victories of Chatham, Clive and Wolfe, she could sustain her position as one of the great powers. At times it looked distinctly improbable. In 1783, forced to swallow the bitter pill of the loss of the American colonies, many Britons, George III and Horace Walpole among them, concluded that the sun had set. In practice, as Christie shows, the loss of America was shrugged off with surprising ease and commercial relations were soon running at a higher level than before. The second moment when the future looked desperately dark was in the later 1790s. Faced with the terrifying new power of revolutionary France, Britain was crippled by naval mutinies, bad harvests, rebellion in Ireland and widespread disaffection at home. In the end, as a power, Britain did more than survive: it emerged in 1815 with enhanced influence and prestige, on the threshold of its greatest influence on world events.

But what was also increasingly clear by 1815 was that the Britain which had survived was no longer the old Britain of market-towns, cathedral cities and great country-houses. The institutions of the country creaked and groaned under the pressure of both war and economic change without human precedent. The old poor-law system, scarcely altered since Elizabeth's day, was breaking down under the weight of numbers. The rudimentary organs of local government could no longer cope with the growing industrial towns. In a post-Enlightenment England, the continued exclusion from full political rights of Catholics and Dissenters seemed less and less defensible. In the new climate of Benthamite utility, the existence of rotten boroughs like Gatton and Hindon, and the exclusive European countries was changing faster than any of the others.

Ian Christie uses as his organizing theme the problem of survival. There was little chance of Britain failing to survive in the fundamental sense – of following Poland and Venice into utter oblivion as states. The question was whether, after the heady and perhaps misleading victories of Chatham, Clive and Wolfe, she could sustain her position as one of the great powers. At times it looked distinctly improbable. In 1783, forced to swallow the bitter pill of the loss of the American colonies, many Britons, George III and Horace Walpole among them, concluded that the sun had set. In practice, as Christie shows, the loss of America was shrugged off with surprising ease and commercial relations were soon running at a higher level than before. The second moment when the future looked desperately dark was in the later 1790s. Faced with the terrifying new power of revolutionary France, Britain was crippled by naval mutinies, bad harvests, rebellion in Ireland and widespread disaffection at home. In the end, as a power, Britain did more than survive: it emerged in 1815 with enhanced influence and prestige, on the threshold of its greatest influence on world events.

But what was also increasingly clear by 1815 was that the Britain which had survived was no longer the old Britain of market-towns, cathedral cities and great country-houses. The institutions of the country creaked and groaned under the pressure of both war and economic change without human precedent. The old poor-law system, scarcely altered since Elizabeth's day, was breaking down under the weight of numbers. The rudimentary organs of local government could no longer cope with the growing industrial towns. In a post-Enlightenment England, the continued exclusion from full political rights of Catholics and Dissenters seemed less and less defensible. In the new climate of Benthamite utility, the existence of rotten boroughs like Gatton and Hindon, and the exclusive to the old order, but with the coming of peace, as so often happens, the problems returned larger than ever.

I hope it is not unfair to Christie to suggest that he is more at home dealing with resistance to the foreign foe than with the domestic changes. Indeed, his treatment of the warfare of the period is one of the triumphs of the volume. Successive British governments have frequently been pilloried for their incoherent and piecemeal response to Napoleonic France; Christie pulls together the threads of strategy and explains clearly why ministers behaved as they did. But the growing domestic opposition to the old order, and decline of consensus, gets less sympathetic handling. It is perhaps significant that William Cobbett, the most widely read journalist of his day, is given less than one sentence, and there is no discussion of the growth of the press, despite the fact that Christie has himself written with authority on newspapers.

This underlines another aspect of the volume. It is a rather sober, not to say conservative view which is presented. It is conservative in the sense that it concerns itself mainly with high politics and Parliament, and essentially with the governmental side of high politics – with the view from Downing Street. One suspects that Christie's sympathies do not lie instinctively with oppositions. He remarks of the opposition in the 1760s that the kind of issues they were raising were not "in the grain". It is an intriguing metaphor, yet worrying. For the issues raised in the Wilkes case, for example – the power of juries, general warrants, freedom of the press, the rights of electors, even the press-gang – were all issues of personal and political liberty, and are very much in the grain when seen as the impact of enlightened ideas. The Rockinghams and Foxites, treated with almost hagiographical respect by some historians, take some hard knocks from Christie. They are backward-looking, paranoiac; but, above all, factious and irresponsible

Indentured immigrants

Esmond Wright

DAVID W. GALENSON

White Servitude in Colonial America: An economic analysis

291pp. Cambridge University Press. £22.50.
0 521 23686 X

David W. Galenson's study of white servitude is an outgrowth of his Harvard dissertation of 1979: "The Indenture System and the Colonial Labor Market". It is the first thorough analysis of this important and intriguing phenomenon since Abbot Emerson Smith's pioneering *Colonists in Bondage* appeared thirty-five years ago, and if it does not in any major way alter Smith's findings, it brings a formidable quantity of research and statistical evidence to bear on a subject which, compared to slavery, has received little attention.

For the first time we have a rigorous analysis of the demographic, social and economic characteristics of an important sample, the more than 20,000 immigrants who crossed the Atlantic and began a new life between 1607 and 1776 by selling their labour for a period of years. He draws these from a collection of English legal registrations of indentured servants. These formed between five and seven per cent of the total servant population, which in turn formed at least one half (perhaps as many as three-quarters) of all white immigrants to North America in the colonial period. It was by the device of indenture that the bulk of the labour force was supplied for the West Indian plantations and for the Southern mainland colonies before they turned to black slavery.

One hundred of Dr Galenson's 280 pages form a daunting series of notes and appendixes, and part of his text is built around carefully assembled statistical tables; it is a solid and of economic data – perhaps he is still the prisoner of his doctoral material – and he uses very few of these illustrative quotations that would have brought a personal flavour to the book. for some important Revolutionary figures had themselves, or had by descent, an indentured origin – as did, for example, Charles Thompson and John Harrower. But this said, it will hardly be necessary, and it would be difficult, for anyone to attempt to better Galenson's work.

Dr Galenson argues that the system of indenture was an adaptation to American and West Indian conditions of an institution basic to the English agricultural economy. Indentured servants were, as one would suspect, predominantly male, and generally concentrated in the ages from fifteen to twenty-five. Very few were in any sense "gentlemen". A large number were farmers, both yeomen and husbandmen; many were skilled; however, notably in building or in textile crafts, and there were not a few those whom William Bullock in 1680 called the mother country's "idle, lazie, simple people". This skilled element increased strikingly among the London indentured servants who emigrated in the eighteenth century. By that time, too, almost all were going to the American mainland and not to the West Indies. By the 1770s, 79 per cent of immigrants, both male and female, were going to Chesapeake Bay. By the time of the Revolution indentured servitude had almost completely disappeared from the British West Indies: of 3,328 indentured servants registered as leaving England during 1773–1775 only twelve were bound for the West Indies. In 1770, blacks made up 94 per cent of the population of Barbados.

The migrations were, it seems, overwhelmingly of individuals seeking to better themselves. It would have been interesting to see a comparative analysis, were it possible, of the migrations from Scotland, where most

Resisting the classics

Roger Garfitt

DEREK WALCOTT

The Fortunate Traveller

99pp. Faber. £3.95.
0 571 11893 3

Writers born in the outlying provinces of a culture are doomed to face the question Derek Walcott posed in his third collection, *The Gulf* (1969): "They'll keep on asking, why did you remain?" Many writers have preferred, as Clive James has said, to migrate to the language centre. Others have chosen to stay, as Walcott stayed in the West Indies until recent years, for the sake of "something rooted, unwritten/that gave us its benediction,/its particular pain".

The complexity of Walcott's response to his native landscape is aptly conveyed by that juxtaposition of benediction and pain. There is the sense of being "blest with a virginal, unpainted world, with Adam's task of giving things their names". There is also, however, the suspicion that the names, like the world, are outlandish, that the casuarinas should properly be cypresses – "and you would have/to be colonial to know the difference,/to know the pain of history words contain,/to love those trees with an inferior love". Hence the impulse to authenticate the landscape by endowing it with classical properties. To a poet of Walcott's education, the classics are, in any case, an inevitable source of personal myth. In "To Return to the Trees" (from *Sea Grapes*, 1976) he imbued a sea-almond with the spirit of Seneca to create a memorable personal emblem, while "Egypt, Tobago" (from *The Star-Apple Kingdom*, 1980) is a tender reworking of the story of Antony and Cleopatra. But the classicizing impulse is countered by a recognition that the landscape can only finally be authentic insofar as it resists such importations.

It is this resistance that comes uppermost in Walcott's new collection, *The Fortunate Traveller*. "In the soil of our islands no gods are buried", he declares, "They were shipped to us, Seferis,/dead on arrival." He describes a moment reached only "after half a hundred years", when, "signed on to follow that gold thread/which linked the spines down a dark library shelf", he finally came to

the dead end of the classic labyrinth,
and, with this blade of agave, hacked down
the old Greek bull. Now, crouched before blank stone,
I wrote the sound for "sea", the sign for "sun".

That Edenic marking on the sand is not, in the context of Walcott's work over two decades, as simple as it looks. Or rather, the simplicity has continually to be regained, by repeated acts of exorcism.

To be rid of history is to be rid of one realm of pain. But without history, "there is too much nothing here", and nothing has its own ghosts, as listed in Walcott's autobiographical long poem, *Another Life* (1973): "miasma, acedia, the enervations of damp". It is out of nothing that the herons rise, the gulls screech, the frigate hawks endlessly circle – that Walcott's poetry has acquired its familiar spirits. In the new collection, his poem on Jean Rhys brilliantly re-creates the oppressiveness of nothing happening. "Port of Spain" describes his own accommodation to it:

I feed on its dust, its ordinariness,
on the inertia that fills its exiles with horror,
on the dust over the hills with their orange lights,
even on the pilot light in the reeking harbor
that turns like a police car's. The terror is local, at least. Like the magnolia's whorish whiff.
And the dog barks of the revolution crying wolf.

But for all that, in recent years Walcott has himself gone into virtual exile in the United States. No doubt now they'll keep on asking, why did you leave? The reasons are not far to seek. As early as *The Gulf* there was a sketch of the "hoarse and hungry thousands at whose centre/the politician opens like a poisonous flower". By the time of *Sea Grapes*, seven years later, Walcott is inveighing bitterly against "these pimp Nkrumahs" and preparing for the exile that he finally enters in *The Star-Apple Kingdom*, under the aegis of Mandelstam and in the company of Brodsky. Mandelstam is a lofty precedent, but the dignity of "Preparing for Exile" and the power of "Forest of Europe" leave no doubt of Walcott's right to invoke him, just as in *The Fortunate Traveller* he invokes the shade of the exiled Ovid.

"The Hotel Normandie Pool", besides which Ovid appears "in a robe of foam-frayed terry cloth", is a finely judged poem, light in tone, able to encompass not only Walcott's political exile but also "the disfiguring exile of divorce". Equally successful, in the colloquial idiom that dates back to the cuatroman of Walcott's first collection but was not extensively used until *The Star-Apple Kingdom*, is "The Spoiler's Return" – the Spoiler being a calypso singer risen from Hell to comment satirically on present-day Trinidad. Both are notable poems, all the more serious for not striking important attitudes.

In this they contrast sharply with the title poem, the narrative fiction of a don-turned-diplomat who, rather in the manner of a Greene hero, betrays a Third World country for which he has genuine compassion. Perhaps the betrayal is intended to obviate any suggestion of preaching. It does not manage to alter the obviousness of lines such as "Famine sighs like a scythe/across the field of statistics", nor the rhetoric of

The heart of darkness is not Africa.
The heart of darkness is the core of fire
in the white center of the holocaust.
The heart of darkness is the rubber claw
selecting a scalpel in antiseptic light,
the hills of children's shoes outside the chimneys . . .

That reference to the concentration camps is made again in "North and South", another poem of evident ambition in which Walcott travels from Manhattan to Virginia, where

The ghosts of white-robed horsemen float
through the trees,
the galloping hysterical abhorrence of my race –
like any child of the Diaspora, I remember this . . . .

In both poems there is a sense of over-amplification, of a genuine and specific feeling being inflated by the inclusion of a fashionable *angst*. This seems suspiciously like an American infection, and one can only hope that it will be cured by regular immersions in the benediction and the particular pain of Walcott's native islands.

Intensity in flashes

Grevel Lindop

WES MAGEE

A Dark Age

46pp. Belfast: Blackstaff Press. £3.50.
0 85640.256 7

What distinguishes a good poem from a merely competent one? Real poetry from the plausible, amiable, forgettable substitutes that try so hard to take its place? These questions are prompted by Wes Magee's new book, *A Dark Age*, in which nuggets of pure poetic gold gleam out from the mass of competent, well-intentioned work that just fails, somehow, to realize itself as poetry. Sometimes the magic works for only a few lines. An example is "Winter domestic", where Magee describes rather conventionally a cosy, untidy interior – "the children hibernating in rugs" while the poet "huddle[s] before a roaring fire" – and then, arbitrarily enough, imagines "A Venusian beamed down to this room" and what he would see. Nothing very remarkable, it appears, except that "His report would describe how the being/Brandished a blackened rod to control/A many-tongued, log-devouring beast", and from their stodgy context the lines leap out, full of life. It is appropriate that the heavy stresses and the alliteration should recall the ominous, impersonal vision of the Old English riddles. Yet the poem at once sinks back into mediocrity, growing portentous and imprecise with "talk of galactic blackness" and firelight "Reel [ing] off walls like a Christmas Eve drunk".

"Snapshots at the slate mine" has similar flashes of intensity. The first section presents in Imagist fashion a series of fragmentary perceptions, most of which do not earn their space on the page. "Sheep droppings in/the 'General Office' " and "A fractured water pipe/gushing refreshment" may be pleasantly evocative for those who have pottered about the derelict slate-quarries of North Wales, but they convey no sense of poetic discovery. But then we are surprised by "Rusty bogie wheels/fused with the iron earth" – which arrests a moment of mysterious transformation and tension between *the man-made and the natural, the detailed and the massive.*

A later section of the same sequence offers an instructive example of Magee's frequent failure to sustain or integrate this kind of power. Gazing into the mouth of a disused tunnel

From Guinness blackness you hear
a distant crump and rumble;
the hill's slate heart collapsing.

The first image conveys the darkness vividly, but its effectiveness is purely local. In context it acts mainly as a distraction, and weakens the impact of the splendid final line. It smacks of the creative writing class rather than the achieved poem.

Much of the work in *A Dark Age* suffers from this failure to allow the imagery to suggest depths below the explicit statements of the poems. All too often the pursuit of striking local effect means that a whole poem is no more than the sum of its parts; the subterranean life of deepening implication, irony and ambiguity is missing.

Yet a handful of poems in *A Dark Age* escape these limitations, communicating a stark, paradoxical vision of weird beauty. "Mermaid" recollects a childhood glimpse of a girl, nearly drowned, rescued and given first aid on the beach. The poem works by inversion: the hunkin girl becomes a sea-creature dragged struggling to land; holidaymakers crowd in to see, and

I recall shoving through
The crush, how her slack mouth
Spewed into the bronze beach,
And the way she fish-gasped,
Drowning in strange stuff, air.

"The shock treatment" is similarly odd and powerful, and the four-part sequence "Cattle trucks" works well, its disparate elements building up a living structure of perceptions and implications – just what is lacking in the weaker poems. The cattle trucks become the focus for childhood memories of helping to drive cattle to a country railway-station in Ulster during the Second World War; to these are added thoughts of the trains heading at that very time to the Nazi death-camps; and these meditations converge finally on the present day, with poignant and threatening implications.

This summer's day, as I write,
the century steams towards
its unknown destination.
In the garden my boy
is chasing butterflies,
his hands clap-clapping
at their dusty fragility . . .

The final couplet suggests that we must be grateful for the pockets of innocence that survive; but the overall impression is of derelict, perhaps sombre, sites: the wreckage survives: "The splintered sides . . . scrawled with chalk, / named destinations of the past – / Majdanek, Treblinka, Auschwitz: the slaughter-houses of Belfast."

Poems like this are an impressive achievement. A whole volume matching this, or the momentary flashes of power in many of the less successful pieces, would be a major event. Wes Magee owes it to himself to scrutinize more closely the disturbing sources of his art, eliminate from his work the imprecise and the merely clever, and give us the fine poetry *A Dark Age* promises but only occasionally delivers.

Feelings of insecurity

Tim Dooley

JAMES BERRY

Cut-Way Feelins, Loving, and Lucy's Letters

39pp. Available from Department of Humanities, North Staffordshire Polytechnic, Beaconsfield, Stafford, and The City Lit, Stukeley Street, Drury Lane, London. £1.
0 905354 01 X

E. A. MARKHAM

Love, Politics & Food

44pp. Available from Walter Rodney Bookshop, 5a Chigwell Place, Ealing, London, W.13 and *Ambit*, 17 Priory Gardens, London, N.6. £1.
0 900855 02 2

MATTHEW SWEENEY

A Dream of Maps

48pp. Dublin: Raven Arts Press. £4.50 (paperback, £1.20).
0 906897 17 3

James Berry won the 1981 National Poetry Competition with his poem "Read of an African Boy". *Cut-Way Feelins, Loving and Lucy's Letters*, published jointly by the magazines *Limestone* and *Strange Fruit*, brings together three earlier sequences by this interesting poet. The poems in the "Cut-Way Feelins" section are told in artistic control are seen to their best advantage.

Lucy, the narrator of these poems, is a middle-aged Londoner, whose letters home to a West Indian friend mix dialect and conventional English. ("City speaky-speaky is mixed up / here, with bush talk-talk, darlin' / an' with Eastern mystery words", she confides to Leela.) Her adoption of British ways is puzzled and partial, combining nostalgia for the apparent ease of life "at Yard" with recognition of the economic and practical advantages of her present existence:

Daycleen doesn' have cockerowin'
Midmornin' doesn' bring
Cousin-Mas with her asseberry tray . . .
Still-fahrin' no-copper dustbin
Girl. But Sat'day mornin' don'
find mi han' dry, don' find mi face
a heavy cloud over the man.

She sees her children growing up "a different breed", confident but confused. Her husband has "gone native", a victim of "TV glamour" and "football madness", and when she is gardening, Lucy herself comes to see her adopted home in a new light:

There at Yard, we never see
bare trees a-sleep in a mist
like sheet. We never see
all of a summer gole' ragged
in a shout of dying' colours.

The language of "Lucy's Letters", like Huckleberry Finn's English, is a literary confection, exploiting the creative potential of dialect rather than reflecting actual usage. It is an pamphlets *Lambchops* and *Lambchops In Disguise* which E. A. Markham published in the mid-1970s under the borrowed persona of Paul St Vincent ("experienced sheet-metal worker and round-the-clock negotiator"). *Love, Politics & Food* opens with an essay, "Lambchops for the '80s", in which Markham humorously outlines the processes which led to the choice of his name for the Blackenglish Everyman and comments more generally on the difficulties involved in being given a name by an alien and alienating colonial power:

E. A. Markham was not a name, but
an affiliation on contract[illegible]
[illegible]
dispensation and my situation – that
is my lack of prospects – urgently
called for something less comic.

Of the poems which follow, "Racial Prejudice Day" and "A Mugger's Game" look at another difficulty connected with naming: the problem of being "a problem". Markham handles this with a characteristic irony. "A Tale of Passion", which deals with rather joyless adultery, and "Land Behind the Mountains", set in Albania, show Markham keen to explode political and sexual myths. "The Sea", which looks back to his native Montserrat, reveals Markham at his demystifying best:

I used to be at the bottom of the hill
and brought white ships and news
of a far land where half my life
[illegible]
and console me for loss of the sea.
I will discourage them,

Like both Berry and Markham, Matthew Sweeney is a Londoner by adoption and a villager by birth. *A Dream of Maps* starts in his Donegal village, where "The priest dances / with the pretty lady" and "the dead walk around in speech", but moves on quickly to wider, more contemporary themes and subjects; television coverage of the Cambodian famine, the threat of nuclear war, and so on. Sweeney's writing is unusual in its combination of moral persuasiveness with imaginative exuberance. In a few weak poems these qualities dwindle to [illegible] mannerisms, but when he is at his best, as in the extraordinarily telling fables which intimate disaster without succumbing to hysteria. He is also impressive as a poet of the inner city – suggesting absurd dislocations without descending to incoherence. This is a poetry of sudden departures – where moonlight-flits from a seedy present not only miss "the dream dressed in a well-cut shadow" that they have been seeking, but find themselves trapped in a cycle of attrition:

As if time was stuck
and rain always there.
As if these new bombs
in cars & cafés
are the same old ones
falling in slowmotion
– these thirty years.

The first issue of *Poetry Durham*,

Manifestations of the God

Edmund Leach

DAVID DEAN SHULMAN

Tamil Temple Myths: Sacrifice and Divine Marriage in the South Indian Saiva Tradition

472pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press. £21.30.
0 691 06415 6

David Dean Shulman's densely packed text is a welcome addition to the literature but its defects need to be spelled out. Of the 470 pages 120 are devoted to scholarly apparatus – glossaries, notes, bibliography, motif index, place/deity name index. But there is no general index of the ordinary sort and the reader who wants to discover what use the author has made of the work of, say, Louis Dumont or Wendy O'Flaherty will be in difficulty.

Then again, at enormous expense and to the credit of the publishers, every Tamil or Sanskrit word has been transcribed into roman script modified by a mass of subtle diacriticals. The orthography is consistent but no attempt is made to cater for those who are uninterested in the subtleties of Tamil spelling. It is surely frustrating to have such standard place-names as Tamil Nadu, Madurai and Kancheepuram transformed without glossary into Tamiḷnāṭu, Maturai and Kāñcipuram? Anyone who understandably fails to recognize that "And it is *ay tiṉ Pāṇṭiyaṉ kiṅ* that Śiva is the husband of the goddess of Maturai" refers to the historical dynasty of the Pandyn will miss the whole point of the emphasis.

All this is a pity. The variety of people who might be interested in this book is much greater than the narrow range of specialist scholars whom Shulman has sought to address. His stories are rich and varied. They are presented in lucid English with just *about the right amount of scholarly annotation. The overall coherence of* his materials shows through, even if at times the manner of exposition seems designed to add obscurity rather than clarification.

Although some of the key ideas are plainly derived from Professor O'Flaherty's *Asceticism and Eroticism in the Mythology of Śiva* Shulman's book is by no means just a transfer of this pioneering study to a South Indian milieu. Indeed, although there are stylistic similarities, it is really quite a different sort of book. O'Flaherty's purpose was to exhibit the classical mythology of Saivite Hinduism as a coherent structuralist "theme and variations". Her procedures at that point in time were very strongly influenced by the work of Claude Lévi-Strauss and she paid little or no attention to the ritual contexts in which the myths which she analysed are actually used.

Shulman's study is very much less structuralist in intention. The fact that binary oppositions and mediating ambiguities show through on every page arises from the nature of the materials rather than from any concern with the dogmas of *The Raw and the Cooked*.

Shulman's first purpose is simply to provide an English-language archive of source materials most of which have hitherto been available only in work written in Tamil at various dates between the twelfth and nineteenth centuries. Many of the stories are closely related to the much earlier Sanskrit stories discussed by O'Flaherty but they have a South Indian locale and are, in most cases, linked with particular manifestations of Śiva and his *śakti* consorts as identified in the patron gods and goddesses of individual Tamil Nadu cult centres. In practice, most of Shulman's stories are very thin on local context but, since he tells us where they come from, this is a deficiency which, at least potentially, may be made good by future research.

This local identification is very welcome, but Shulman's interests are literary rather than anthropological. He seldom refers to recent on-the-spot researches into the cult practices of the shrines with which his stories are associated, and his interpretation of the religious significance of the stories, though quite possibly correct, is based on *a priori* hunch rather than on any *first-hand functionalist observation of* how they are used or on any systematic structuralist comparison.

In these respects the book has a rather old-fashioned flavour. The stories are grouped according to manifest similarity of their motif content rather than in terms of permutations or interconnections of overall pattern. Thus the long chapter on "The Divine Marriage" sorts the stories into box categories: "The Reluctant Bride", "The Lustful Bride", "Sex reversal: The Male as Goddess and Mother"; and so on. The same stories grouped according to their locality and their context of use would carry different and, in my view, more interesting implications.

And again, in accordance with a long-established Indological tradition, Shulman always seems to assume that the oldest myths are somehow the most authentic and furthermore that cult practices in present-day rural villages are "survivals" from the earlier practices of the main cult centres. For an anthropologist these underlying "Frazerian" assumptions are embarrassing.

As a case in point, one of Shulman's central themes is that, whenever a myth contains a sequence which involves the killing or the wounding of a god or a demon, or a symbol of either, this indicates a survival of "the Brahminical concept of sacrifice as it appears from classical Sanskrit texts". This argument is carried so far that a war between the Goddess and a buffalo-demon Mahiṣāsura, which featured in some of the most famous examples of South Indian art and which is described by Shulman as "the archetypal myth of the goddess in India", is seen as a war between the Goddess and Śiva himself in which he takes the form of a sacrificial buffalo "murdered" by his divine spouse.



This cool and remote scene was originally published in W. L. L. Scott's Views in the Himalayas *(1852), but is reproduced here from* Simla: A Hill Station in British India *by Pat Barr and Ray Desmond (108pp Scolar Press. £7.50 paperback. 0 85967 659 2). The European lady seated in a jampan is visiting one of a number of old temples near Simla, that "haven of familiarity pinnacled above the alien dust of the plains", and familiarly known in the nineteenth century as the Viceroy's Shooting Box, the Abode of the Little Tin Gods and Mount Olympus.*

Granted the complex system of symbolic transformation which runs through all this material, a interpretation of this sort is not so far-fetched as it may appear when she baldly summarized, but to justify its interpretation Shulman refers to contemporary ethnography: "The ritual of buffalo sacrifice is undoubtedly an underlying force in the Mahisa myth; in south Indian villages the buffalo is still a favoured sacrificial victim. In the village sacrifice, a special role is reserved for the buffalo head, which may be offered to the goddess, carried in procession, or used in connection with boundary rites."

This generalization is then backed by footnote references to a slim volume by Henry Whitehead, Bishop of Madras, first published in 1916, a similar but much more scholarly work by W. I. Elmore, written in 1913, and Louis Dumont's major anthropological field monograph published in 1957. The Whitehead and Elmore books both explicitly state that their material came from Telegu and not Tamil speakers. What they have to say about buffalo sacrifice seems relevant but derives from a single source, a story told to Whitehead by an untouchable priest in Bellary (a town on the borders of Mysore and Andhra Pradesh, far to the north of Tamil Nadu). The Dumont reference is to the sacrifice of goats and does not mention buffalo sacrifice at all.

This is not mere pedantry. My point is that, despite the apparent richness of his scholarly apparatus, Shulman is led to be relied upon once he leaves the field of Tamil literature in which, quite plainly, he is extremely expert. He even though his interpretations are often unconvincing it somehow comes across that this mythology has a logic of its own: "though this be madness, yet there is method in't". This is a book that should be in every anthropological library.

Ideals of marriage

C. J. Fuller

THOMAS R. TRAUTMANN

Dravidian Kinship.

269pp. Cambridge University Press. £35.
0 521 23703 3

To most non-specialists, the title of Thomas R. Trautmann's book may indicate very little and it is therefore necessary to explain what it is about. The languages spoken in the four southern states of India (Tamilnadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka), as well as those of some of the tribal peoples outside this region, belong to the Dravidian family. The languages spoken in most of the remainder of India, together with Sinhalese, belong to the Indo-Aryan family. Throughout the Dravidian-speaking area, but also in parts of Maharashtra and Gujarat and in all of Sri Lanka, kinship systems are of the "Dravidian" type, which differs significantly from the type of kinship system characteristic of northern India.

The quintessential feature of the Dravidian kinship system is a division into "cross" and "parallel" relatives. In anthropological jargon, cross cousins are the children of one's mother's brothers and father's sisters, parallel cousins being the children of one's father's brothers and mother's sisters. In Dravidian kinship terminologies, parallel cousins and sibling are referred to by the same terms, which are clearly distinguished from those for cross-cousins. These terms are applied not only to those who are, to the western way of thinking, "biological" relatives, but (by a simple set of rules) to all relatives in one's own generation. Relatives in the parents' and children's generations are also divided into cross and parallel relatives, and, in some cases this dichotomy is present in the grandparents', and grandchildren's generations as well.

To explain all the features of the cross-parallel dichotomy more accurately would require much space, but there are two critical points that need to be made. First, this type of terminological system involves a radically different categorization of the total set of kinsmen from that found in Euro-American systems, which lump all cousins together and distinguish them sharply from siblings. Secondly, the cross-parallel dichotomy is associated with a marriage rule that states that one should or must marry a cross-cousin, whereas parallel cousins, as siblings, are of course unmarriable. In north India, by contrast, very different kinship terminologies are found and no cross-parallel dichotomy exists. Obviously, therefore, there can be no cross-cousin marriage rule, and indeed (except in some Muslim communities) marriage to a close relative is generally prohibited.

Kinship systems with a preferential marriage rule are not found only in India and Sri Lanka, but also, in particular, among many indigenous peoples of south-east Asia, Australia, Oceania and south America. Such systems have long been a favourite topic for anthropologists specializing in kinship, especially since Lévi-Strauss published *Les structures élémentaires de la parenté* in 1949. Scholars working in this field will have to study Trautmann carefully, not least because he has brought together an unprecedented quantity of data previously scattered in innumerable books and articles, and analysed them with great thoroughness and rigour. However, *Dravidian Kinship* is not primarily a contribution to structural studies of kinship, but rather an attempt to demonstrate that Dravidian kinship is a "historical construct" to discover the nature of the original Proto-Dravidian kinship system, and to explain how the various extant systems have developed divergently from their Proto-Dravidian root. With the tools of modern scholarship, Trautmann is trying to solve a problem that was, in a somewhat different guise, central to the anthropology of India in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: namely, to rediscover the culture of the Dravidian peoples who dominated India before the arrival of the Indo-Aryans in about the second millennium BC.

In essence, Trautmann's method of investigation is to compare all the available data on Dravidian kinship systems, especially on terminologies, and to abstract their common features. These features, it is argued, are definitive of the Proto-Dravidian system. This task takes up the first half of the book. In the first chapter of the second half, the Sanskrit legal literature of the *dharmaśāstra* on kinship and marriage is analysed in order to show in particular the influence exerted on Dravidian systems by the classical Sanskritic ideals of marriage. The next chapter is devoted to a demonstration that cross-cousin marriage was never typical of Indo-Aryan kinship systems, thus disposing of the supposition that it was. The last chapter concerns the effects of the politics of kingship on Dravidian kinship systems, and attempts to explain how these systems have been distorted by political factors in various contexts, especially in Kerala, where the cross-cousin marriage rule is not universally found.

This summary does not do justice to Trautmann's analysis, but at this stage I must confess to disliking this style of argument. The whole of Trautmann's book seems worth less than the sum of its parts: many of these parts are excellent. The synthesis of data on Dravidian systems and the precision with which they are analysed are unprecedented in the literature. The same scrupulous attention to detail and command over vast amounts of material are equally evident in the treatment of the Sanskritic literature, and there are, *inter alia*, fascinating discussions of many different problems, for example a superb passage on gift exchange in Indian thought. The scholarship displayed in quite dissimilar academic fields has to be admired without qualification. Nonetheless, the book's principal objective seems of little consequence. It is difficult to believe that any abstraction of common features could reveal the Proto-Dravidian system, nor even that such a thing ever existed. Why not postulate several different systems that have partly converged? Even if Trautmann were right, we could never know that he is and this issue is therefore rather uninteresting. Moreover, despite its length, most of the analysis is concerned with kinship terminologies alone and the significance of terminologies for the understanding of kinship systems as a whole is greatly exaggerated by Trautmann (and many others), especially when, as here, the less systematic terms used in address are mostly ignored. The discussion of Kerala, critical of his argument, is unsatisfactory because Trautmann draws almost exclusively on Gough's material. Her data are certainly the best, but the evidence is plain that other Nayar communities have significant ways different from those Gough studied, and the tricky problem of the Nambudiri Brahman system is almost entirely ignored. Moreover, no convincing reasons are given as to why a deviation from the "pure" Dravidian system occurred in Kerala in the form it did. Why not elsewhere or otherwise?

These last questions may be carping but they stem from the central difficulty which is that Trautmann's argument is not truly historical at all. It does not in fact tell us about the historical development of Dravidian kinship, but speculates about its origins to produce an untestable hypothesis. Like the speculations of the 19th evolutionist ethnologists of India, Trautmann's thesis does not, in the end, assist us very much in interpreting the ethnographic and historical data that we do possess. No one, in future, will be able to write about Dravidian kinship, nor probably about kinship in north India or in other areas of the world where there are cross-cousin marriage systems, without consulting Trautmann, but whether his book will have a significant impact on most of those future scholars is very much questionable.

Leaping to the stirrup

Brian Bond

THE MARQUESS of ANGLESEY

A History of the British Cavalry 1816–1919. Volume 3: 1872–1898

478pp. Leo Cooper/Secker and Warburg. £35.
0 436 27327 6

Every schoolboy used to know the *Punch* story of the subaltern's reply to the inspecting general who asked him to define the cavalry's role in war: "Well, I suppose to give tone to what would otherwise be a mere vulgar brawl". The Marquess of Anglesey quotes this as an epigraph in the latest volume of his monumental *History of the British Cavalry*, and also includes Sir Baker Russell's remark that the duty of cavalry was to look smart in time of peace and to get killed in war. These sayings, and the Duke of Cambridge's statement in 1890 that, so far from being over, the heyday of cavalry was just beginning, may seem to confirm popular notions of an arm of the service more distinguished for dash and display than for brains.

Though far from uncritical, Lord Anglesey shows that in the later nineteenth century, when the cavalry's traditional roles were increasingly under fire, its history was much more complex and interesting than myth suggests. The cavalry certainly did not attract so many intelligent and professionally ambitious officers as the engineers and the artillery, but by no means all of its leaders were either aristocratic or stupid. Frederick Burnaby, Valentine Baker, Winston Churchill and Hope Grant are just a few of the talented officers who feature in these pages. Admittedly Hope Grant partly fitted the stereotype: he was quite useless at map reading and could not even tell the points of the compass. Yet he introduced significant improvements in training at Aldershot, and had an uncanny sense of how to fight battles.

The charge of wealth and privilege is harder to counter: it was difficult for cavalry officers to exist without a private income of at least £300 a year or more in the really smart regiments such as the Household Cavalry and the 10th Hussars. However, it is well to remember that "Wully" Robertson began his phenomenal ascent from private to field-marshal in 1877 in the 16th Lancers, and the ill-fated Hector Macdonald also started his distinguished career in the ranks of the cavalry. It is moreover anachronistic to apply modern standards of professionalism to an era when officers' pay, already barely adequate to cover expenses, was considerably reduced. In 1881, for example, a captain's daily pay was reduced from 14*s* 7*d* to 13*s* and a lieutenant's from 9*s* to 6*s* 8*d*.

Potential readers who do not consider themselves military historians should be reassured that this is not primarily a book of battles of the traditional kind. Indeed even military historians may be hard put to name many distinguished cavalry exploits in this period: the dash to Cairo after Tel el Kebir in 1882, and the spectacular but unnecessary charge of the 21st Lancers at Omdurman in 1898, but what else? Lord Anglesey does not attempt to provide a comprehensive history of all cavalry actions in the period, but he shows that British and Indian regiments were prominent in the Zulu wars, the Second Afghan War, the numerous operations in Egypt and the Sudan and the first Boer War of 1881. These campaign vignettes require a considerable effort from the reader because they focus on the cavalry's part with less attention to the contribution of the other arms. Lord Anglesey is not much concerned about how things looked from "the other side of the hill". The native enemies, in all their variety, are depicted almost entirely from the viewpoint of the contemporary British soldier with numerous references to "fuzzy wuzzies", "niggers" etc, though on the political plane Gladatone's refusal to avenge Colley's defeat at Majuba and reluctance to intervene in either Egypt or the Sudan are emphasized.

The introductory chapters, however, are of considerable general interest since they place the cavalry – at home and in India – in its full military and social context. The author's enthusiasm for every aspect of service life as described in the best available sources is vividly communicated to the reader. He has, for example, unearthed several cases of serious indiscipline, including a cavalry mutiny at the Curragh twenty-seven years before the famous one in March 1914. He describes regimental routine, mess customs and games, noting for example that there was a craze for snooker in the decades following its invention in 1875 by bored subalterns at Jubbulpore. We are given full details of the troops' daily rations and their accoutrements on campaign in Afghanistan in 1880. The year-by-year location of every cavalry regiment is charted in an appendix. The first use of the telephone in the field for military purposes is noted in Egypt in 1882, and three years later at Suakin the telegraph was first extended right up to the front line.

In general this volume records steady progress in nearly every aspect of the cavalry's existence such as equipment, drill manuals, training and veterinary science. By 1898 most stallions were gelded under chloroform, and horses could be fitted with new shoes "cold" on the march without the encumbrance of a mobile forge. On the debit side there are recurrent complaints about faulty weapons; Gardner (as well as the more famous Gatling) machine guns jammed at critical moments, while swords and bayonets frequently snapped or twisted like corkscrews. An instance of the "cavalry spirit" which has secured the arm an undeserving reputation was the attempt to apply horse routine to camels. Farcical attempts were made to shoe the latter in the Sudan in 1884, and Wolseley had to forbid the wearing of spurs in the camel corps. More serious was the complete neglect of firearms by many cavalry commanders. Churchill recalled that only after the gallant but extremely costly charge at Omdurman did his colonel remember that they had carbines. As with the charge of the light brigade at Balaklava, the most futile and inefficient part of the battle was the most extravagantly praised. Lord Anglesey has postponed discussion of the prolonged controversy over the cavalry's role to his next volume when it reaches its climax in the aftermath of the South African War.

This handsomely-produced and skilfully presented volume maintains the high standards of scholarship and readability set by its predecessors. It deserves to reach a wider public than professional historians and military history enthusiasts.

Opening the sea-cocks

Bryan Ranft

DAN VAN DER VAT

The Grand Scuttle: The sinking of the German Fleet at Scapa Flow in 1919

240pp. Hodder and Stoughton. £9.95.
0 340 27580

The story of Germany's High Seas Fleet is full of irony and contradiction. Conceived by Tirpitz as a means of furthering his country's interests by ensuring Britain's neutrality in any future war with France and Russia, it had the opposite effect of bringing the world's strongest sea power into the ranks of Germany's enemies and thus making her defeat inevitable. During the war itself, owing largely to its numerical inferiority and unfavourable geographical situation, and after its considerable achievement at Jutland, the fleet played a rapidly diminishing role. It was not even used effectively in support of the U-boat campaign against merchant shipping; a weakness which no less a modern naval professional than Admiral Gorshkov has described as the main reason for the failure of Germany's potentially decisive use of sea power against her enemies. Instead, as the fleet rusted in harbour, the morale and loyalty of its crews rapidly declined and eventually provided fertile ground for the seeds of mutiny and revolution, which, together with military defeat in France, destroyed the Wilhelmine Empire. Taken into internment after the Armistice of November 1918 it scuttled itself at Scapa Flow in June 1919; an act seen in Germany as redeeming the fleet's honour, but which also removed one of the major causes of discord among the Allies as they struggled to maintain their wartime unity during the peace negotiations.

Dan van der Vat, a *Times* correspondent sent to the Orkneys in 1978 to cover a seal cull which was cancelled, used the opportunity to follow up the story of the scuttling locally as a prelude to investigating it more thoroughly in the British and German archives. The result is a readable and imaginative book, sympathetic towards Admiral von Reuter who ordered the scuttling, but adding nothing to historical understanding. Only a little more than a third of its pages deal with the concluding drama. These are preceded by necessarily generalized accounts of the origins of the Imperial Navy, the battleship race with Britain and the course of the war at sea before the mutinies and surrender. The final section deals with the postwar salvage operations which were still continuing, although in a very reduced form, as the book was being written.

Mr Van der Vat has all the journalist's skills of compression and clarity, and his introductory sections present a generally acceptable account of immensely complex events. But the reader must be on guard against inaccuracies. Nelson was safely interred in St Paul's two years before the 1807 attack on the Danish fleet at Copenhagen. The Emperor Wilhelm II was King Edward's nephew, not his cousin. The otherwise competent account of the Battle of Jutland is marred by a failure to give Jellicoe credit for his initial fleet dispositions, acknowledged even by his critics to have been his most momentous decision.

More important, although Van der Vat makes great play with his use of the naval archives at Freiburg and his correspondence and interviews with German naval veterans, his account of the scuttling adds little to those readily available in British and German publications. The one important particular in which he diverges from Arthur Marder's view that there was no firing on sailors escaping from the sinking vessels while they were in lifeboats or in the sea, makes little impact because of the total lack of detailed references to sources which mars the whole book. The other major controversial point, the reasons for the presence of the main British naval force guarding the interned ships, are analysed far better by Marder. These objections aside, Van der Vat's understanding of the significance of the scuttling and the readability of his narrative have a great deal to offer the general reader new to the subject.

The Aeroplanes of the Royal Flying Corps (Military Wing) by C. M. Bruce (642pp, Putnam. £25. 0 370 30084 X) has just been published to mark the seventieth anniversary of the formation of the Royal Flying Corps. In 1910 Captain Brooke-Popham, later to become Air Chief Marshal, said in a lecture "that he saw no reason why aviators should not shoot at one another while flying" and in 1912, after he had taken over command of Number Two (Aeroplane) Company, took little time in putting his views into practice. The book records in detail the histories of the types of aeroplanes acquired and used by the RFC – many of which were not tested in battle until 1918.

ATHLONE

AUTUMN 1982/SPRING 1983 TITLES



Turgenev's Letters
selected, ed. & trans. A. V. Knowles
Some of the most important letters written by Turgenev, touching on his life and writings, and literary, social and political events in Russia and Europe.
July 1983 c. £18.00

The Brownings and France
A Chronicle with Commentary
ROY E. GRIDLEY
Relates the previously untold story of Robert and Elizabeth Browning's lifelong interest in France and shows that France was the country with which they felt most affinity.
October 1982 £18.00

Ibsen: The Open Vision
JOHN S. CHAMBERLAIN
Argues that the characteristic spirit of Ibsen's work arises from his refusal to provide definite answers to the moral issues raised in and by his plays.
October 1982 £15.00

The Religious Life of Samuel Johnson
CHARLES E. PIERCE
'a superb work . . . full of insights.' W. J. Bate, Harvard University.
January 1983 £12.50

The Elizabethan Pamphleteers
Popular Moralistic Pamphlets 1580–1640
SANDRA CLARK
The first comprehensive account of an important branch of popular literature, which illuminates many aspects of Elizabethan thought and society.
December 1982 Illustrated £18.00

Nietzsche and Philosophy
GILLES DELEUZE, trans. Hugh Tomlinson
Long recognised as one of the central accounts of Nietzsche's philosophy, this book can be seen to stand at the beginning of the post-structuralist movement. Professor Deleuze has written a preface for this first English translation.
January 1983 £14.50

The Need for Interpretation
Contemporary Conceptions of the Philosopher's Task
ed. SOLLACE MITCHELL & MICHAEL ROSEN
New essays from the younger generation of philosophers, emerging from work with Charles Taylor, who also contributes a major essay.
February 1983 £14.00

The Transport Contractors of Rye
A Chapter in the History of British Road Haulage
THEO BARKER
The success-story of a typical British business, family-run, independent, locally-based and resourceful.
September 1982 £7.95

Catalogue of the Goldsmiths' Library of Economic Literature
Volume III *November 1982 £50.00*
Volume IV (Index to complete Catalogue) *May 1983 c. £75.00*

London School of Economics Monographs on Social Anthropology

56. Communication, Social Structure and Development in Rural Malaysia
A Study of Kampung Kuala Bera
WILLIAM D. WILDER *December 1982 £18.00*

Institute of Latin American Studies Monographs

11. Latin America and the Second World War Volume Two: 1942–1945
R. A. HUMPHREYS *October 1982 £18.00*

12. British Railways in Argentina 1857-1914
A Case Study of Foreign Investment
COLIN M. LEWIS *July 1983 £20.00*

Already Published 1982

From Locke to Saussure
Essays on the Study of Language and Intellectual History
HANS AARSLEFF
'lucid, informative, profound, provocative and well-argued . . . it must, if Aarsleff is right, radically alter our understanding of the intellectual history of modern linguistics.' Roy Harris *London Review of Books* £18.00

The Individual and His Times
A Selection of the Poetry of Roy Fuller
ROY FULLER, ed V. J. Lee
'an excellent selection from the Fuller poems, with a useful introduction by the poet, outlining the course of his own development.' Anthony Powell *Daily* [illegible] *PB only £2.25*

Tolstoy on Education
Tolstoy's Educational Writings 1861–62
ed. & trans. ALAN PINCH & MICHAEL ARMSTRONG £18.00

Empirical Inquiry
NICHOLAS RESCHER £15.00

Shakespeare and the Story
Aspects of Creation
JOAN REES
'an unusual, timely and most welcome contribution to the understanding and appreciation of Shakespeare's way of going to work.' George Hibbard *Renaissance Quarterly* *PB £6.95 HB £17.00*

Women in the House
ELIZABETH VALLANCE
'an astute analysis of the problems facing would-be women MPs' Shirley Summerskill *Listener* *PB £5.95 HB £14.60*

London School of Economics Monographs on Social Anthropology

55. Forest Traders
A Socio-Economic Study of the Hill Pandaram
BRIAN MORRIS *£18.00*

The Athlone Press Ltd
58 Russell Square
London WC1B 4HR
Tel: 01 636 1301/2
Telex 261507 Ref: 1334

The exemplary martyr

Henry Gifford

NIKITA STRUVE

Ossip Mandelstam

302pp. Paris: Institut d'études slaves. 120 fr.
2 7204 0176 5

Nadezhda Mandelstam, a critic not easily satisfied, thought very well of an essay which Nikita Struve wrote in 1968 for the *Collected Works* edited by Gleb Struve and B. A. Filippov. In it Struve considered three aspects of the poet's achievement, all inter-related: destiny, vision and voice. These ideas he has developed, with Nadezhda's continued interest while she was alive, in the present book. It attempts something as yet unfulfilled by other commentators – a statement about the work as a whole, in support of his view that Mandelstam has exceptional significance, and not for Russian poetry alone. He writes in French, but his clear and detailed exposition throbs with a specifically Russian feeling. Western readers may find themselves not always attuned to it. The case however is impressive, and even though this triple approach makes for some overlap, as Struve acknowledges, the work deserves an important place in the growing literature on Mandelstam.

The notion of a poet's destiny (which governs the first long section) is an uncomfortable one in the Anglo-Saxon world. Even Hardy, from whose writings the term "destiny" is certainly not absent, cannot be said to have lived out anything so portentous in the sober routine of Max Gate. Possibly Hart Crane, or other American poets since who have brought disaster on themselves, might be accounted for in this way; it might seem to legitimize their destruction, though it is question-begging still. In Russian poetry, from Pushkin onwards, the case is different.

To "live by verse", in Pasternak's famous phrase, is to live dangerously, most of all under the Soviet régime. Mandelstam made a very deliberate choice so to live, with a single-mindedness that prepared him for death, should death be the consequence. At first he could think that the revolution and Russian culture were not antagonistic to each other: thus in 1921 he wrote of Blok's service to both. That the manipulators of the political scene were "enemies of the word" soon became obvious to him. Finally there was no alternative left but an exemplary martyrdom. Struve does not shrink from the word; and it is difficult to contest that Mandelstam's life was disciplined to meet this end.

Struve proposes that the art of Mandelstam should be taken as wholly Christian in spirit. (Like Pasternak he was actually baptized, and felt ill at ease with Judaism.) The key text is a long fragment surviving from his essay of 1915, "Pushkin and Scriabin", which begins with a meditation on their deaths as "national" and "Russian". "National" stands here for the Orthodox term *sobornyy*, "involving the whole community [of believers]." Mandelstam affirmed that a writer's death should be seen as the final link in the chain of his achievements. Later in the essay he declared that art had been set free by the Redemption to play in joyful confidence. Struve notes here his departure from the Augustinian view expressed by the Catholic writer Léon Bloy, for whom a Christian art is unthinkable, because art is a "parasite" that was found crawling on "the skin of the first serpent". It is tainted with a rebellious pride. But Mandelstam – unlike Marina Tsvetaeva for instance – could see no contradiction between this activity and the truly Christian life. He claimed in "Pushkin and Scriabin" that "spiritual gaiety" was a characteristic of this art which could become "a free 'imitation of Christ' ".

Such an imitation, with all the tragic consequences not foreseen by him in 1915, Struve maintains to have been the burden of Mandelstam's destiny. There can be no denying that his poetry, both in the *Tristia* volume of 1922 and in the final Voronezh phase, is Christian in pathos. Mandelstam does not assume prominently, as Yury Zhivago is allowed to by Pasternak, the role of a Hamlet overshadowed by Christ. But the Voronezh exile led him to accept the inevitability of death, since capitulation to falsehood was the alternative, and his culminating poem in the Voronezh series touches on resurrection.

Mandelstam's generation of poets, as Struve observes, coming after the timeless void of Symbolism were much concerned with history. He names Eliot, Reverdy and Ungaretti (who is often quoted for additional light on the perceptions of his Russian contemporary). Blok's "historical flair", setting him apart from the other Symbolists except perhaps Bely, much impressed Mandelstam. His own is no less remarkable. Like Eliot he had attended Bergson's lectures in Paris, and Bergson's thought "penetrated" him, as Struve puts it, to an extraordinary degree (whereas Eliot could speak disdainfully of its "meretricious captivation"). He found the idea of progress inapplicable – indeed, "utterly lethal" – to poetry. Eliot's sense of European literature having "a simultaneous existence" was also his; but the notion of "an ideal order" formed by "the existing monuments" is too contemplative for Mandelstam. Like Bergson he thinks that "reality is movement": the key words of his poetics, expounded finally in the "Conversation about Dante" (1933), are all, as Struve points out, Bergsonian – the Russian equivalents of *énergie, élan, mouvant, impulsion, durée*. Tradition for him is endlessly self-renewing: the poets of the past need to live again, the past has to be completed in the present. So he can enunciate the paradox: "Classical poetry is the poetry of revolution."

The "historical sense", acording to Eliot, "makes a writer most acutely conscious of his place in time, his own contemporaneity". There was a moment when Mandelstam could not accept contemporaneity with the world he had to live in. When, however, at the beginning of the 1930s he came back to poetry after five years of incapacitation and moral uncertainty, we may agree with Struve that he was uniquely able to "measure history and measure himself against it". Even if his "place in time" meant exclusion from the Soviet present, the awareness of an unbreakable continuity in European culture gave richness and power to his poetry. He restored virtually that "unity of being" for which so many of his contemporaries had been searching. His poetic thinking over the years was integrated, and propelled, as he says Dante's was in the *Divine Comedy*, towards the future.

Recently in these columns (*TLS*, May 7) John Bayley examined the poetry of allusion which increasingly tends to occupy modern critics. "Great poets and artists", he argued, "establish a primal reality", transcending the force of any learned allusion in the work. He asked: "Why is it that so many critics today have given up trying to create that pure reality and have made a virtue of living among echoes?"

Mandelstam is indisputably a poet steeped in allusiveness. But, as he insisted in the "Conversation about Dante", "a quotation [*tsitata*] is a cicada [*tsikada*]", and it cannot be stilled. In his poetry the cicadas bear witness to a real sun in a real landscape. Restoring the past, the abiding experience of man in all its freshness, making it genuinely "primal", is the work of "seeing fingers", a rounding out, a reincarnation. Struve calls him the "poet of plenitude", a very rare thing in modern literature. Mandelstam's later poetry, composed under the threat of extinction, impresses by its hold upon life. The last Voronezh cycle ends on a tentative but buoyant hope:

The flowers are deathless. The sky entire.
And what will be is only a promise.

The future can never constitute more than a promise. But promises are made to be kept: Struve, paraphrasing Mandelstam, says that some are words the strongest assurances. What brings such interest to the work of this poet is its unyieldingness. He had found renewal to be the law of life, so that memory could persist as hope.

Eloquently unspeaking

Kyril FitzLyon

ANTON CHEKHOV

The Early Stories 1883–88
Chosen and translated by Patrick Miles and Harvey Pitcher

203pp. John Murray. £9.50.
0 7195 3936 6

Early Chekhov – before 1886 – though not, of course, entirely unknown, is relatively little read. The present collection of short stories written within the period 1883–88, is, therefore, particularly welcome, and all the more so since the choice is excellent. In the course of those half-dozen years, Chekhov gradually sloughed off the skin of the humorist who signed his name "Chekhonte" and contributed trite little sketches with snap endings to popular comic papers. Typical examples are the first two stories in this collection: "Rapture", describing the gleeful pride of a young student on seeing his name printed in a newspaper report of an insignificant traffic accident; and "The Death of a Civil Servant", already dealing, though in somewhat primitive form, with Chekhov's favourite theme – the *leitmotiv* of so much of his work – the mutual incomprehension of human beings, the failure to connect, in the Forsterian sense. For even in those early days the later, mature Chekhov keeps peeping through, notably in the terseness of the narrative style, which, in his case, means not just the ability to convey a great deal in very few sentences, but more especially the mastery of silence: his omissions and reticences are sometimes more eloquent than explicit statements. Pelageya's inarticulateness in "The Huntsman" (1885) reveals her emotions and her state of mind far more clearly than any flow of words would have done.

On a deeper level, Chekhov's attitude remains constant throughout. To the dismay and irritation of the Russian intelligentsia, including most Russian literary critics, he was moved not so much by social conscience as by individual morality. It is the absurdity of individual behaviour, not the iniquity of society, which is ridiculed in, for instance, "Fat and Thin" (1883), with the unsuccessful man cringeing before his successful fried and thereby embarrassing him, or in "The Chameleon" (1884), where a policeman's attitude to a man bitten by a dog fluctuates as he receives contradictory information regarding the dog-owner's identity, or in "The Malefactor" (1885), in which an illiterate peasant is unable to understand why the law should punish him merely for unscrewing nuts securing rails to sleepers.

There is an element of clowning in all this, but gradually it disappears and absurdity acquires a poignant quality because it is seen to be the result of men's unalterable nature, which may be vicious or virtuous, but is, in any case, outside their conscious control. "The Chorus Girl", written in 1886, on the threshhold of Chekhov's second phase and which was particularly admired by Tolstoy, is a beautiful example. No blame is or can be attached to any of the characters; the irony is there, but it is inherent in the situation and in the natural prejudices of all concerned. People (as so often in life as seen by Chekhov) speak to each other as if the speaker alone existed, with not so much as an attempt to grasp each other's meaning or point of view: they are incapable, in fact, of doing so.

Most of the stories in the collection were written in 1886 and later, when Chekhov's tendency to allow the plot – when there is one – to be dominated by the compulsive behaviour of the characters, became even more obviously apparent. The tramp in "Dreams" unburdens himself to the two policemen accompanying him, for no real reason, apart from some inner need to communicate with his companions. Nothing is resolved by his confession; nothing is gained or, for that matter, lost by it. The situation remains unchanged. [illegible] which aroused a great deal of indignation in its day for the sordidness of its details, part of the tragedy is contained precisely in the impossibility or, at least, unlikelihood of change, made all the more unbearable by the main character's realization of this impossibility.

The last story of all in the book, here translated as "Let Me Sleep", is the horrifying tale of a very young girl – a slavey – driven by want of sleep to murder a baby whose crying keeps her awake. In Russia it met with a hostile reception, particularly from the liberal critics, such as Mikhailovsky, the most prominent of them. It was, he thought, a typical example of Chekhov's regrettable lack of a guiding principle, his readiness to write about anything, without a "general idea" to inform his work for the edification of his readers. In England, by the time the story reached it many years later, didacticism was out of fashion and the story was much admired by, among others, Katherine Mansfield, who paid it the ultimate compliment of plagiarizing it.

The quality of the translation by Patrick Miles and Harvey Pitcher is quite exceptional throughout. Obviously, anyone with a knowledge of Russian is bound occasionally to disagree with their choice of an English equivalent – this is inevitable in the case of any translation, however good. The point is that for most of the time the Miles/Pitcher version reads almost as smoothly as if English was its original tongue. This is all the more remarkable since conversations play a very important part in the majority of Chekhov's stories (naturally, for a future playwright) and, as every translator knows, it is speech, particularly working-class or peasant speech, which is more difficult than anything else to render convincingly into another language. Very occasionally, the translation sounds a jarring note. I doubt very much, for instance, that an English tramp would refer to his mother as "mamma". But this is an exception. The general level is high indeed.

An Observation on a Parable Told in Different Ways by Three Poets *viz.* William Blake, Richard Dehmel, W. H. Auden

1.

Beneath Eternity's sunrise
The lovers kiss, the sweet Joy flies.

Trapped in the blackening window-pane
He fumbles up and down again.

His keepers smile to see him beg,
And brush his face, and make a leg.

2.

There is a brimming spring called Grief.
From it pure Joy spurts on each leaf.

I peer into the pool and see
Horror staring back at me.

Plunge in and drink: that portrait hung
Is smashed in sweet drops on the tongue.

3.

Make a penthouse, a perfect nest,
Jacuzzi, Hi-Fi, all the rest . . .

The fitted carpet on the floor
Is there to muffle something more.

A shaft of undressed stone that drops:
No builder yet knows where it stops.

Claws labour up the crumbling lime
And clutch the rim at cocktail time.

. . .

OK. You cannot keep things nice.
And neither Grief nor Joy ring twice.

Poets must flick in and out of mind
As if we had no other kind

Of knowing than they make and speak.
We work it out ourselves each week.

Their images seduce what's true
And coax it into something new.

Read them with Joy. Then choose your tins.
Fixed the planned drink. Degust sardines.

John Bayley

The diagnosis of disorder

Robert Towler

BRYAN WILSON

Religion in Sociological Perspective

187pp. Oxford University Press. £8.50 (paperback, £3.95).
0 19 826663 4

The sociological study of religion has fallen into two distinct phases. At the turn of the last century, it was discussed by every major figure in sociology. Then after the First World War it disappeared from view, except in the study of simple societies by social anthropologists, until it reappeared around 1960 as a subdiscipline, the sociology of religion. Since that time it has had a discernibly different career in the United States, in Europe and in Britain, and leading writers have emerged in each tradition. On the British scene, none has been as prominent as Bryan Wilson. *Religion in Secular Society*, 1966, has been read by more people than has any other British book on the sociology of religion. In addition to the many he has edited, this new book is his eighth in twenty years.

Religion in Sociological Perspective is based on lectures Dr Wilson gave in Tokyo in 1979. Because he was addressing Japanese audiences he has produced a general statement of his view of Western society and Western religion, and one which is exceptionally clear and uncluttered. The book is an important one, therefore, for those who have benefited from his perspective in the past. Its six chapters discuss the sociology of religion as a scientific discipline, the contrasts between religion in the East and in the West, religious sects, the so-called new religious movements, both in Japan and in the West, and the "secularization thesis" of which Wilson is the main proponent.

Chapter Two, "The functions of religion in contemporary society", forms the core of the book, with some of its themes discussed again in the final chapter. Here Wilson spells out his diagnosis of contemporary society, following lines sketched in *The Youth Culture and the Universities*, 1970, and *Contemporary Transformations of Society*, 1976. The analysis has the form of a syllogism: religion is necessary for a humane and ordered society; religion is in decline; trouble is coming.

Wilson elaborates his major premise in terms of Toennies' distinction between *Gemeinschaft* (a "persisting local, face-to-face group, as typically represented by the clan or the village") and *Gesellschaft* (an "extensive, impersonal, politically co-ordinated state society"), and he argues that something vital has been lost in the transition of the West from one to the other. There is an ambiguity as to what has been lost, except that religion is identified as having provided it in the past. On the one hand it is presented as meaning and purpose, support and solace, which are needed the more urgently in the soulless modern world of technique and impersonal relations. "Modern society rejects religion on intellectual grounds", but only religion can provide such reassurances.

On the other hand what is lost could be something more crucial to basic social order, for Wilson argues that, although our society is characterized by rational procedures, people co-operate in following them because of "a sense of commitment, of obligation, a disinterested goodwill, an attitude of public responsibility and civic virtue". This is a long-standing interest of Wilson's – he has edited a book entitled *Rationality*, 1970 – and he maintains that the functioning of a rational social order is dependent on values which were a by-product, or "latent function", of religion. For many of those involved in the operation of the modern social system, "it is almost possible to assume", he writes,

> that personal virtues have become superfluous, because the system works impersonally. The system, increasingly committed to technology, is also increasingly committed to purely procedural values. The agencies which sustain the old-fashioned virtues are

Yet, were these dispositions not widely diffused within the population, were there no residual disinterested goodwill and social obligation, the whole exchange relation would be impossible. Thus there is a paradox: behaviour that appears, when narrowly viewed, to be rational for each individual, and which the system itself promotes, is insufficient, given the nature of humanity, to maintain the basic background conditions for its own operation. There are unexplored elements of "input" on which a modern society depends but which it does nothing to service.

That is the major premise. The minor premise, that religion is in decline, is treated as self-evident. The conclusion is reached with a quasi-Weberian resignation:

> Contemporary society operates as if affective-neutrality were a sufficient value-orientation for things to work; it may yet discover that there are other necessities, the virtues nurtured essentially in local communities, in religious contexts, which in the long run will be shown to be as indispensable to the society of the future as they were to the communities of the past.

In *Religion in Secular Society* Wilson argued that religion would necessarily decline in modern society, except for that of the sects, which would provide a haven of *Gemeinschaft* for those unwilling or unable to live in unmitigated *Gesellschaft*. Now, sixteen years later, his argument is wider. Except for the few people who opt into sects and the new religious movements, the progressive decline of religious institutions will, he predicts, affect all, since it undermines the foundations on which society rests and as a consequence there will be increasing social disorder.

Wilson is very aware of disorder: "The growth of crime, of vandalism, and of neurosis and mental breakdown; the growing disruption of marriage; the increase in various types of addiction, whether to drugs, alcohol, or gambling; and the incidence of personal isolation, loneliness, and suicide" are among the ills to which he draws attention. Specifically in Britain, he says, "there are strikes and absenteeism on a wide scale, and there is a considerable incidence of vandalism and hooliganism". According to Wilson's analysis, these phenomena are the result of the breakdown of community and the concomitant decline of religious institutions which formerly nurtured vital values of selflessness. There is an echo, perhaps, of Voltaire: "I want my lawyer, tailor, valets, even my wife, to believe in God; I think that if they do I shall be robbed less and cheated less."

Many people will find this analysis appealing, but how, one wonders, might it be tested? What finding or findings would falsify it? Like all functionalist explanations, it has the appearance of containing a prediction, but on closer inspection it is an explanation *ex post facto*, the conclusion of the syllogism being contained in the evidence for the major premise. Wilson's argument here is strongly reminiscent of his earlier demonstration of religious decline: the figures for church attendance show the decline for Europe, but in America, where the figures are buoyant, he maintained that it is the secularization of religion itself which indicates decline. It could be argued that hypothesis-testing would not be appropriate to examining sociological explanations of this order, and that a more historical approach is to be preferred. Against such a defence one would have to point out that the decline of *Gemeinschaft* began a very long time ago. How far, or for how long, must it proceed before social disruption occurs? And by asserting that "signs of breakdown . . . manifest themselves in somewhat different ways in different societies", Wilson precludes the question which criteria of breakdown should be regarded as significant.

The decline of religion, too, is a protracted affair. The proportion of civil marriages in England and Wales, religious disaffiliation, topped 10 per cent in the 1850s, 20 per cent in the 1900s, and rose to more than 30 per cent only in the 1960s. Which is the crucial point in the decline? Or, to take an admittedly hard case, how would one account for Poland, where an urban, industrial society appears to promote religious fervour, but where, nevertheless, there are abundant signs of breakdown?

Though stated in a more developed form, Wilson's analysis in *Religion in Sociological Perspective* is of a piece with his earlier writings. For all its interest, it contains two fundamental weaknesses. The first is that the basic term, religion, is used in three distinct ways. In itself, this is unexceptionable, indeed it is probably necessary, but it constitutes a weakness because Wilson slides from one meaning to another without warning, which results in grave confusion. At one point religion denotes churches or sects, in other words religious organizations or fully differentiated religious institutions. At another point it refers to diffuse beliefs in supernatural agencies, either of a personal or of an impersonal character, and to behaviour influenced by such beliefs, as when he writes that, in medieval Europe, "paganism was usually more, rather than less, religious than Christianity, and heresy was usually more trenchant and enthusiastic than normal Christian belief". This gives rise to confusion because the evidence Wilson cites for religious decline always relates to the churches, and diffuse religiousness, which was "more religious than Christianity" in past ages, is dismissed in our own day on the grounds that even if it were prevalent – whether it is, is not examined – it would be socially insignificant because it is unorganized.

At a third point Wilson is referring to religion when he writes of "agencies which sustain" certain valued dispositions, such as "disinterested goodwill and social obligation". This is confusing because, while he says clearly that he will adopt "not a functional, but a substantive, definition of religion", it transpires that a substantive definition is consistent with his analysis only if he ascribes a vital function to supernatural beliefs, and solely to supernatural beliefs. This is tantamount to adopting a functional definition, for everything in the argument suggests that he would reject the idea that a puritanical form of socialism, for example, might effectively sustain disinterested goodwill and social obligation, even in an industrial society.

The second fundamental weakness in Wilson's analysis is found also in the writings of Peter L. Berger, the doyen of American sociology of religion, particularly when he writes about wider matters than religion (as in Berger *et al*, *The Homeless Mind*). In the same sense that some theorists are customarily described as vulgar Marxists, each, in respect of this weakness, might be called a vulgar Weberian. Both writers display a marked tendency to identify a global process which is at work (Berger calls it modernization, while Wilson calls it "societalization"), and then press empirical evidence into service to demonstrate its existence and effects. The vulgarity consists in the way they handle the evidence; they are Weberian in identifying an ineluctable driving force of social development. For Wilson, the decline of religion is but one component, albeit a crucial one, in the process of societalization: "Western history, and perhaps history everywhere, documents the process. . . ." According to Wilson, the dynamic of this process derives from the internal logic of social development, so that it is possible for him to assert that "the pressures within the system are towards the reduction of individuality and towards the organization of men [and women]. . . for the sake of efficiency and rational co-ordination". This kind of assertion, which is to be found in Berger also, is hopelessly teleological. What is extraordinary, however, is that Wilson should not ask whose interests are served by greater "efficiency and rational co-ordination". The argument would shed its metaphysical quality if the role of capital in the process were to be explored, and "strikes and absenteeism" might then be interpretable as socially meaningful actions with deep historical roots, as Weber would doubtless have seen them, rather than responses to "pressures within the system".

Wilson has done more than any other British scholar to stimulate the sociological study of religion, and his work on sectarian religion, from *Sects and Society*, 1961, to *Magic and the Millenium*, 1973, and *The Noble Savages*, 1975, provides a peerless example of how to conduct empirical work firmly grounded in sociological theory. Precisely because he is so significant a scholar, however, his confused and confusing analysis of modern capitalist society needs to be shown to be as ill-founded as it is. His conclusion could be correct, but if so it is based on an inspired guess, for it does not follow from the arguments advanced. Bryan Wilson rightly denies a romantic attachment to the *Gemeinschaft* of the Middle Ages, but one wonders if he is not secretly nostalgic for the 1950s, when there was no less social disorder than in any other period of human history, but when schoolboys still wore caps and schoolgirls gym-slips, and undergraduates still wore neckties: when order meant deference to one's allotted place in the social hierarchy, not the absence of disorder.

Freedom in the faith

J. L. Houlden

SCHUBERT M. OGDEN

The Point of Christology: the 1980 Sarum Lectures

193pp. SCM. £5.95.
0 334 01276 7

Apart from its purely historical aspect, the study of Christian doctrine is an uncertain branch of scholarship. What are the criteria for its proper conduct? Is its task simply the interpretation of the tradition? If so, from what standpoint is interpretation permitted or required? Or is its job to develop the tradition beyond its present state? If so, in the light of what range of considerations? How far beyond the bounds of faith may it look for sustenance? Is it meant to proclaim, to explain, to criticize or to speculate?

Professor Schubert M. Ogden's Sarum Lectures, delivered in 1980 [illegible] on a subject of intense current interest in the doctrinal field, do not quite state a position on these fundamental issues, but his general stance is sufficiently clear. He is firmly within the tradition but attentive to modern attitudes and assumptions which render old statements no longer attractive. He is not a radical but a developer, and, in general sympathy, an existentialist developer. He is not, therefore, one who thinks christology is a false trail, now to be abandoned because of historical conclusions (or the lack of them) about Jesus. On the contrary, his existentialist proclivities lead him to point out that even the first Christians proclaimed not exactly who Jesus was but who he was *to them*.

The first achievement of this book is to bring together two distinct interests which make christology now so problematic. The first is that of historical enquiry, in principle theologically disinterested. The second is that of faith, concerned to explicate the conviction that Jesus is decisive for self-understanding in relation to God and all else. The two interests, the one, modern, the other, as old as together. Professor Ogden forces the admission that the quest for objective historical information is, beyond a few elementary matters, fruitless. What the evidence gives us is witness to Jesus, conditioned by faith; yet it is nevertheless possible and desirable to ascertain the earliest, purest apostolic witness, so that the basic claim of christology may be seen in its elemental form: that Jesus is "the decisive re-presentation of God".

Ogden's main concern, however, is to explain or, as he puts it, "make the point of" christology, and not simply "talk about" that point in the light of its difficulties and limitations. If the point of christology is to speak of "the meaning of Jesus for us, given our more fundamental question about the meaning of ultimate reality for us", then it is related to our widest and deepest needs. These are described under the general heading of "liberation", and much of the second half of the book is devoted to a vindication of political and social reform as appropriate application of the Christian understanding of freedom. Jesus himself, Ogden admits, was not interested in bringing about social restructuring (such a thing was not on any agenda available to him), but his presentation of God's love in his own life and person entails it for us.

Writing in the light of both Edward Norman's Reith Lectures and the work of the Latin American liberation theologians (both of which extreme positions he eschews), Ogden harks back to the work of Reinhold Niebuhr, who in his day equally affirmed the implications of belief about Jesus for social and political life. In lectures delivered in England, it would have been appropriate to appeal to the even older tradition of classical Christian socialism, based, in the works of such as Charles Gore and R. H. Tawney, on precisely the christological conviction to which he appeals.

Will that tradition stand this new presentation? Ogden hopes to show that it passes the two tests of appropriateness and credibility, and he has less difficulty with the former than with the latter. It is not hard to make a present condition of a christology which sees Jesus in the role of liberator, "in the sense of one who sets us free for the freedom of the children of God".

But credibility raises precisely the questions with which we began. In what frame of reference is this belief about Jesus in fact believable? It requires both knowledge that Jesus is truly at the fount of a tradition which proclaims such a message and an understanding of God which can "authorize" it. On both issues, despite the closeness of the argument, ambiguity seems to remain. We have only the apostolic witness to Jesus and the facts about him remain strictly inaccessible; yet the earliest stratum of that witness, as identified by the author, is accorded special weight, and it is hard not to think that it is, at least partly, historical weight. On the theistic backing for Jesus, we are told on the one hand that as we have no immediate knowledge of God, so also analogical reasoning can give no access to his character; yet on the other hand, symbolic language (about God's love and so forth) may be relied upon and acted upon in the world. The impenetrable barrier thus seems nevertheless to be penetrated.

The book's substantial value is twofold: its appreciative but corrective assessment of the numerous recent attempts at revision of traditional christology, and its balanced judgment on the relation of current political theology to christology. It is a work from within the tradition where doctrine, to merit the name, must perhaps belong. The risk is that it will beg too many questions for some who might wish to hear a word from God in a secular age.

William Temple: An Archbishop for All Seasons by Charles W. Lowry (151pp. Washington, DC: University Press of America, distributed in the UK by Transatlantic Book Service. £11.55, paperback £4.55. 0 8191 2355 2) is a new biography and personal memoir with an anthology of Temple anecdotes, and a foreword by the

On the preternatural plane

Robin Robbins

R. D. STOCK

The Holy and the Daemonic from Sir Thomas Browne to William Blake

395pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press. £19.50.
0 691 06485 4

Come on, ye critics, find one fault who dare! For, read it backward, like a witch's prayer. 'Twill do as well.

The Earl of Dorset's lines are not, of course, fairly applicable to R. D. Stock's new book: since he most clearly enunciates his first principles towards the end, deploring "the inability of the typical modern mind to grasp that complexity of imperiousness and grandeur, love and assurance, traditionally ascribed to the Divine Father", his book may be more easily comprehended if read backwards. As printed, his summary view of the writers named in his title occurs a little earlier: "Browne shifts at will onto the preternatural plane; Blake pursues it with the ferocity and determination of a congenital naturalist." Those pedantic enough to wonder how a naturalist could be congenital, or pursue that sort of plane, may find a clue in a preceding declaration of Professor Stock's stance *vis-à-vis* one of his enemies, reason: "Calvinism and its exfoliations were bracing preservatives, throughout the Age of Reason, of a sense of the holy and daemonic." The retrogressive reader will now be prepared for an indication of the proper use of Gothic horror tales: "if, as it has been argued, a deep spiritual understanding cannot be attained without an immediate and strong sense of evil, then these books have their place in our religious education."

Thus grounded in Stock's outstandingly individual conformities, the reader may still want to establish his criteria of literary criticism. These must be inferred from Stock's verdicts and practice, and, since paraphrase might appear implausible or distorted, they are most judiciously and transparently presented through quotation of his singular turns of thought and expression. Blake, he teaches, is "a superb poet of spiritual fear . . . howsoever ambivalent he may have been about the Tyger. . . . But whether Blake's efforts, on the whole, are to be reckoned propitious is another matter." Of Cowper's "The Castaway" Stock pronounces: "I consider this, along with 'Light Shining out of Darkness', to be his most flawless poem", while of Smart's *Jubilate Agno* he reveals that "Taken as a whole it is disunified and monotonous; taken as it was probably composed, in smithereens, it can be quite charming, even haunting." He assures us that in Smart, Wesley, Cowper and Blake "The 'deistic evasion' so alluring to Pope and Thomson is little caressed here." Thus it may be deduced that, for the congenital naturalist, pursuing planes and caressing evasions are not simultaneously compatible activities.

Eighteenth-century novels come in for some substantial comparisons. On Lewis's best-known work Stock delivers a judgment that can have been authorized only by experience: "The after-effects of unbridled lust, the loathing of self and the other, the stupefaction and remorse, are very adequately rendered in Chapter 11 and give *The Monk* a spiritual resonance altogether beyond *The Italian*, or for that matter, *Measure for Measure*", with the judicious concession that "the torture scenes, though more forthright than Radcliffe's, are curiously feckless". Beckford's lasting achievement is even more memorably particularized: "the flagrant hearts – these remain with us". And Stock reveals his grasp of novelistic procedures in such revelations as that "Radcliffe furnishes her own gloze on this scene". Richardson earns treatment proportionate to his bulk: in two pages of simplified summary of the story of *Clarissa*, Stock caters for two sorts of reader at once with such information as "Her mother is inobnoxious but asthenic, of no use to her", and such perceptions as that "her surname, Harlowe, is a near homonym for a very unsavoury word". Alas, Margot Asquith beat him to that one, and we may suspect he is put a little off balance by words beginning with "homo-".

Johnson and Hume are for Stock almost god and devil, though here the holy does not match the daemonic in mesmerizing his faculties. While prompt with crisp verdicts on Johnson's works, praising "the taught and elliptical syntax" of *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, and revealing that, like *Candide*, Rasselas is an oriental tale "exhibiting the reticence of human happiness", it is with Hume that Stock really gets into his stride, offering both particular information on the *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion* – "of this piece he was very fond, chaffing incessantly under his friends' prudential monitions" (such a tease, that Hume) – and general analysis: "Despite Hume's pious obsecrations to Theism, his view of human nature seems quite secular." He gratefully reproduces two 1930s philosophers' assertion of a *petitio principii* in the essay *On Miracles*, but, to show he is neither humanly unforgiving nor divinely unerring, frequently employs the device in his own arguments. One question in particular is begged *passim* in such assertions as that in Lewis "the main thing is intact, the authentic, spiritual horror", that Richardson succeeds with "Lovelace's authentic spiritual horror" and "the whore-madam, Mrs. Sinclair, whose death-agonies, however risibly overcharged, still evoke spiritual horror". By this same means of proof Stock frees us from Hume's evil spell by appealing to "deepest religious instincts". Such are the criteria by which he assesses Young, Blair, Akenside, Watts, Swift, Pope and Blackmore.

Nevertheless, for extremely long stretches, Stock maintains the appearance of a godlike impartiality between superstition and reason. If he momentarily lapses in alluding to the occultist Montague Summers's "effervescent credulity", he redresses the balance twelve pages later by commending Summers's verdict on the equally credulous Glanvill – "undoubtedly the most able as he is the fairest-minded English writer upon Witchcraft in the seventeenth century". Here, however, Stock prefers to hold to his own strict standards: he will not allow John Webster's insistence in *The Displaying of Witchcraft* (1677) that "witnesses must be perfectly sound in their sensory organs and in judgement" (Webster is condignly punished by exclusion from the index). Likewise the scepticism of Reginald Scot in *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584) is dismissed as "very reductive".

On Sir Thomas Browne Stock's characteristic powers are exercised to the full. By rewording Browne's allusion to God the "prescious determiner" as "precious determiner" Stock enables himself to make the point that God's omniscience is "conceptualized hideously as a precious determination". In the same way, he is able to align Browne with Thomson: " 'Gloom' is a central term. Browne had spoken enigmatically of a 'secret glome or bottome of our days'; I suppose he meant our preternatural destiny." For the OED (or notes on humble modern editions of Browne) to reveal that "glome or bottome" means "ball or skein (of thread)" would be wantonly to destroy a fertile linguistic process in a reductive assault on suppositious (Stock would say suppository) hermeneutics.

A prime target of Stock's ingenious and fervid attacks is "the white crow", confidence in progressive enlightenment and naturalism". If any see faith in the spread of reason, any belief that new books are more likely than old to provide sound information, to argue logically, and to enlighten our understanding, still glimmers, it must surely be dimmed by the work of Professor Stock. He certainly evokes in one reader, at least, an authentic, unspiritual, horror. His is a extraordinary book for Princeton to have published. Needless to say, while it is not for the common reader, scholars and critics, teachers and students everywhere, in whatever field, should waste no time in reading it.

The prophetic path

Rosemary Ashton

A. L. LE QUESNE

Carlyle

99pp. Oxford University Press. £5.50 (paperback, £1.25).
0 19 287563 9

In the Preface to his excellent book, A. L. Le Quesne thanks the editors of the Past Masters series "for allowing themselves to be persuaded that Carlyle is indeed the Past Master that I believe him to be". Yet in his Epilogue, he almost apologizes for Carlyle, summing up his achievements in rather negative terms:

> Carlyle's achievement is local in both time and place. He is neither a philosopher, nor a major figure of European, as distinct from British, intellectual history.

Fortunately, Le Quesne manages, in the ninety-three packed pages between these two statements, to show why Carlyle deserves his place in the series, without either overvaluation of his virtues or desperate defence of his vices.

He rightly sees Carlyle's major importance in the prophetic role he adopted, warning his contemporaries of the moral and social dangers of revolution on the one hand and reactionary complacency on the other. There is, I think, a slight distortion in Le Quesne's insistence on the "one brief decade" (dating from "Chartism" in 1839 and encompassing *On Heroes and Hero-Worship*, 1840, *Past and Present*, 1843, and, less convincingly, the *Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, 1845) in which Carlyle fulfilled the role of social prophet. It tends to devalue the importance of the early *Edinburgh Review* articles, "Signs of the Times", 1829, and "Characteristics", 1831, and the enormous influence of *Sartor Resartus* and *The French Revolution*, which first attracted the young Victorian generation to Carlyle. These were the works which drew the admiration of George Eliot, the discipleship of Sterling and Emerson, and (the short-lived) enslavement of J. S. Mill, as well as exercising a more demonstrable influence on the manner and matter of Dickens's and Mrs. Gaskell's novels. It must be said that Le Quesne gives full and fair accounts of *Sartor* and *The French Revolution*, but he places them on the upward stroke of the curve which he draws of Carlyle's career, rather than at or near its height.

Apart from this difference of emphasis, I find the structure of his narrative compelling. He wisely makes full use of the natural progress and decline of Carlyle's prophetic path, linking it closely to the outer events of Carlyle's life and to his developing and changing interests. Thus the move from Annandale to Edinburgh to the "Rational University" is seen as the partial condition of Carlyle's loss of his simple religious faith and temporary adoption of Enlightenment scepticism. The move to London in 1834 marks his progression from essayist and romantic satirist (in *Sartor*) to historian, and in Carlyle's peculiar view of history lies the seed which will naturally come to fruition in the social prophecies of "Chartism" and *Past and Present*. History, as Le Quesne points out, was for Carlyle "the true revelation of the divine, and the inspired historian was the prophet". Le Quesne gives an excellent sketch of Carlyle's view of history in the context of the leading ideas of nineteenth-century thought:

> To Hegel partially and to Marx wholly, history was an autonomous and self-justifying process to Carlyle it was something more like a theatre for the workings of providence which itself remains firmly outside history, and whose main concern is less to steer history as a whole to some satisfactory conclusion than to punish and counter the misdeeds and follies of human beings and human societies. Here too, though, Carlyle is inconsistent, and fluctuates between a providential view of history and a more naturalistic one, gleaned from Goethe and the Saint-Simonians, according to which societies oscillate between ages of faith and ages of unbelief. But on the whole Carlyle was much less concerned with laws of history that could not be broken than with rules of history that must not be.

The last sentence epigrammatically catches Carlyle's essential and differentiating characteristics. Le Quesne gives many such deft accounts of the intellectual background. Even if understandably, some aspects of European culture, most notably "German Romanticism", remain rather vaguely drawn, the particular elements influential on Carlyle are well elicited.

Except in the case of *The French Revolution*, from which Le Quesne quotes aptly, there is rather little direct quotation from Carlyle himself. It is clearly difficult, given the brevity of the work and the need for an inclusive survey of its subject, to give much room to quotation. Furthermore, Carlyle was notoriously long-winded, his rhetorical effects being built up in over-long paragraphs. Nevertheless, one feels the lack, particularly in the central chapter on Carlyle's prophesying, of the prophetic voice itself. *Past and Present* is full of sounding passages of concern for the Victorian poor and disdain for the careless, complacent ruling class. The voice which roused Engels and led to his famous essays on the condition of the working class in England ought to sound directly to us here.

But these are criticisms which should not discourage readers. There are numerous illuminating sketches and stimulating hints for further reading. I can single out only a few here: the description of Carlyle's "quality of stereoscopic vision, his habit of translating this world in terms of values derived from a different and invisible one"; the analysis of Carlyle's strange non-party political position – somewhere between the Tories and the Radicals (he could not decide whether to send "Chartism" to the *Quarterly* or the *Westminster Review*); a shrewd point about Carlyle's heroes: as "meritocratic heroes" – in the lecture on "The King as Hero" Carlyle's two main examples are Cromwell and Napoleon, not hereditary monarchs. In short, A. L. Le Quesne shows well the reasons why George Eliot could write in 1855 (before Carlyle became sour and lost the admiration of many of his contemporaries) that "there is hardly a superior or active mind of the generation that has not been modified by Carlyle's writings; there has hardly been an English book written for the last ten or twelve years that would not have been different if Carlyle had not lived".

Rex Warner's novel, *The Aerodrome*, with Anthony Burgess's Introduction, reviewed in the *TLS*, August 6, is available also in paperback from Oxford University Press (£2.95, 0 19 281336 6).

Double vision

Cedric Watts

DAVID B. PIRIE

William Wordsworth: The Poetry of Grandeur and of Tenderness

301pp. Methuen. £14.95.
0 416 31300 0

Present-day literary critics tend to revere Janus, the two-faced god who presides over texts deemed to be radically paradoxical or contradictory. Whether the critic be a traditionalist, structuralist, post-structuralist, deconstructionist or purported Marxist, he is increasingly likely to be a worshipper of Janus. He may also be a disciple of Bottom, who founded deconstructionism and the self-referential work when he instructed Snug to thrust his head through the lion's neck and explain that it was not really a lion but Snug the joiner ("I am no such thing; I am a man"), so as not to frighten the ladies. Today's critics emulate Snug in their readiness to subdue the works predictably text after text is proved to be Janiform. Whether this approach is fruitful or reductive seems to depend on the critic's acumen rather than on his theoretical premises; but certainly a seductive current fallacy is the binarist one, the belief that the tensions in a work must be two in number (and equally matched), when those tensions may in fact be multiple and unequal.

It is not surprising, then, to find David Pirie claiming that his book's originality lies in its demonstration that Wordsworth's poetry is radically paradoxical. He seeks to demonstrate that "at the heart of Wordsworth's verse" is an "invigorating dichotomy" which sometimes "has simply not been seen at all". The two sides of this dichotomy are, according to Pirie, concern for the value of nature and concern for the value of individual people. He argues that in Wordsworth's better poetry, the tension between the two is emphasized: the poems tend towards self-contradiction, though this may be resolved as paradox; whereas the worse poetry may achieve specious resolution by slackening or eliminating the original tension. Pirie notes that one of his forerunners was William Empson; he might also have noted that forty-two years ago, Basil Willey's account of *The Prelude* emphasized "the cleavage between experience and belief"; "one can see the 'join' ".

What can be both consolatory and daunting about Wordsworth is that (as Walter Pater observed) he often seeks to subdue the animate to the level of the inanimate and to raise the inanimate to the level of the animate; and both man and nature may display understandable reluctance to co-operate in this project. Pirie gives lengthy, elaborate and close analyses of works in which he finds the most honest recognition by Wordsworth of the resultant problems. Sometimes the analyses seem too close. In the sense that the trees obscure the wood, observations of small effects obscuring large effects; and several times the quest for paradox leads to needlessly strained readings, as when the "she" in "A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal" is identified with "my spirit" as well as with a girl. In the case of "The Idiot Boy", the elaborate analysis consorts oddly with the quoted verses, the poetry making the analysis seem over-earnest while the analysis makes the contrastingly simple verse seem particularly pathetic. Wordsworth may, as Pirie suggests, sometimes have the honesty of Shakespeare; but he may also anticipate the insouciance of McGonagall. (The quoted texts have occasional inaccuracies: a word missing here, a punctuation mark there.)

Nevertheless, the book is generally proficient, lucid, strenuous and helpful. Pirie illustrates the relationship between Wordsworth's "clumsy candour" and his kind of "Negative Sensibility"; he admirably justifies the stark ambiguity of "Old Man Travelling", "The Leech-Gatherer" and famous passages of *The Prelude* – particularly the "Spots of Time" in which solitude and "visionary dreariness" confront the claims of love and cheer which they are supposed to support. His discussion of "Michael" is incisive (in noting the nastier aspects of sheep-keeping about which the text is reticent) and particularly persuasive in demonstrating that the poem has "the occasional clumsiness, but also the overall complexity, of verse which moves us by questioning its own premises and ultimately admitting that its subject can, and perhaps should, be seen in two quite different ways". Another victory for Snug and Janus.

Depths of depression

Nick Roddick

THOMAS ALLEN NELSON

Kubrick: Inside a Film Artist's Maze

268pp. Indiana University Press. £22.50 (paperback, £5.97).
0 253 14648 8

PHILIP MOSLEY

Ingmar Bergman: The Cinema as Mistress

192pp. Marion Boyars. £8.95.
0 7145 2644 4

At first sight, these two books have little in common. One would hardly expect the middle-class son of a Swedish pastor to share a worldview with a Jewish autodidact from the Bronx. But they are both, to an extent unusual among film directors, moralists. They have concentrated on sketching a map of the twentieth-century consciousness outside – or, as they might see it, above – political considerations, with concern for character and plot generally taking second place to a more schematic examination of the problems of a world without God. True, they set about it in very different ways. All of Bergman's films, even *The Seventh Seal* and *Shame*, are essentially chamber dramas, gradually refining their images of conflict, guilt and isolation. Since *The Silence* (1963) Bergman film, as Philip Moseley puts it, is not a film that *talks* about God's silence, it is the representation of that silence".

There can be no denying that the book has a guiding idea, nor that Nelson pursues that idea through meticulous examination of the concept, structure and even single images of Kubrick's films. But too often – especially in the case of *The Shining* – he falls prey to the danger of attempting to transfer the associative aesthetic of film to the linear logic of prose. Occasionally, he even takes himself humorously to task for over-interpretation, generally in footnotes. But it is a rearguard action: he is committed to the basic assault, as is shown by his comment on Wendy, in *The Shining*, discovering that her husband has spent the past weeks typing on sheet after sheet of paper "All work and no play make Jack a dull boy": "Wendy's terrified face resembles a pale moon from *2001* rising from behind the horizontal lines of Jack's madness . . . and moving into a space enclosed by two lines". *Kubrick: Inside a Film Artist's Maze* is a serious book, veering between insight and interpretative over-density. Representing a strong intelligent response to Kubrick's films, on the other hand, are anything but chamber dramas: vast, sprawling but intricately structured canvases which portray what Thomas Allen Nelson calls a state of contingency, "a world of total probability and zero signification". In each case the world portrayed is a frightening and depressing one, in which human efforts are thwarted by the inadequacy of the individual (Bergman) or the randomness of the world (Kubrick).

Thomas Allen Nelson's is a somewhat academic book, equipped with a plethora of footnotes and an extensive filmography. Kubrick is, he claims, an artist working in a world from which the "epistemological shift" of the early twentieth century – notably Einstein and quantum physics – has removed the certainty of fact. His aim is to combine Pudovkin's building-block principle of cinematic construction with the ambiguity of Orson Welles, thus allowing the audience directly to experience the idea of contingency. In addition, he shows "a greater interest in states of mind and emotion than in character". Nelson is brilliant in his treatment of *A Clockwork Orange*, excessively complex in his discussion of *2001 – A Space Odyssey*, and generally a very demanding critic. His book deals quickly with the early films, hardly at all with *Spartacus* (on which Kubrick had no real control over script or concept), and devotes long chapters to all the films from *Lolita* to *The Shining*.

Kubrick's films, it is very much work, not play.

Philip Mosley's book on Bergman belongs to a different school of criticism. By his own admission it is aimed at "the experienced but eclectic cinema-goer who, having seen most of Bergman's major films, would appreciate an informed view of their context and significance". His filmography is merely an "outline" and there are no footnotes. Ideally, his book should be read as an accompaniment to some mammoth retrospective of the director's films, since he is excellent at picking up visual and thematic echoes across the years. Unlike Nelson, he is at pains to point out that his subject's films are, in fact, quite simple. And towards the end, definite reservations about Bergman begin to creep in. He finds *Cries and Whispers* "technically flawless but unpalatably harrowing", the films of the late 1970s a bleak reopening of old wounds, and reserves his greatest esteem – as well as his best criticism – for what he calls the "canonical films" between *Wild Strawberries* (1957) and *A Passion* (1969). Indeed, the book gives the impression of having been completed some time ago and hastily updated with a short chapter on the recent films: *From the Life of the Marionette* and *Fanny and Alexander*. Bergman's two most recent films, make it into the filmography but not into the text. Mosley stresses Bergman's Scandinavian heritage, and the influence of Strindberg, but his placing of Bergman in context is sporadic and not really followed through. He is a useful guide to the director's best films, with the sections on *The Silence*, *Persona*, *The Shame* and *A Passion* especially valuable in the way in which they go straight to the core of the conflict. It is a solid introduction to the work of the master not, as the dust-jacket claims, a "provocative" one. Its only real provocation comes in its title, taken from a title-page quotation by Bergman (thentre=wife, cinema=mistress), but never really followed up in the text.

Soap and flannel

Craig Brown

DOROTHY HOBSON

Crossroads: The Drama of a Soap Opera

176pp. Methuen. £8.95.
0 413 50140 X

Crossroads was first transmitted by ATV in November 1964. Originally it was to be called *Midland Road* but the writers changed the title to *Crossroads* which, Dorothy Hobson informs us, "was to be both the name of the motel and signify the Midlands as the crossroads of the country, and also the crossroads of the lives of the two sisters in the serial". It has been watched regularly by fifteen million viewers, but the critics have never enjoyed it. This is because it is shoddily written, badly acted and produced on a stingy budget.

Dorothy Hobson does not see it like that. Her brave thesis argues that *Crossroads* has been undervalued and misrepresented by the critics, that it deals accurately with major human problems, that its viewers are alert and critical ("the myth of the passive viewer is about to be shattered") and that – her trump card – fifteen million people can't be wrong.

She ignores much contrary evidence for instance, a confidential IBA survey which discovered that though *Crossroads* did indeed have fifteen million viewers it scored very low on audience appreciation. Though she is continually applauding "the supremacy of the audience's own perception of the reality of the programme" she fails to match this with the producer's own comment that "the mass of people regard them not as actors but regard them as characters". Barry in the book, she states that comparison with *Coronation Street* is "divisive" and hardly mentions it again. In fact, comparison with *Coronation Street* is extremely illuminating, for that soap opera is not only watched by more people but is consistently well acted and well written. Much of what Dorothy Hobson excuses as inevitable in the production of *Crossroads* is triumphantly overcome in *Coronation Street*. That people discuss the previous evening's soap-opera episode can be news only to one as sheltered from society as a sociologist; to assume that this chat "shatters the myth of the passive viewer" is to get a little over-excited.

Core and permutations

Bill Luckin

DAVID EVANS

Big Road Blues: Tradition and Creativity in the Folk Blues

364pp. University of California Press. £19.50.
0 520 03484 8

Some years ago David Evans wrote a short and impressive biography of the influential blues singer Tommy Johnson (c 1900–1956) which hinted at a more substantial work in progress. In *Big Road Blues*, which is undoubtedly a major contribution to the ethnomusicology and social history of the rural South, Evans has returned to Tommy Johnson's ground and, more specifically, to the small, poor and racially scarred township of Drew, Mississippi. His purpose has been to analyse an already quite well documented blues tradition and to make connections between the local and the national identity of Black American vocal music. This research raises fundamental questions about the making of folk blues, the impact upon the rural tradition of the gramophone revolution of the 1920s, and the extent to which, consciously or unconsciously, groups of blues performers shared (and, to a limited extent, still do share) a pool of "anonymous" melodies, lyrics and improvisatory techniques. A further concern is with modes of cultural transmission in a society poised, as Mississippi was in the period 1890–1930, between oral communication and communication through new forms of technology.

Surprisingly, even when, in the mid-1920s, the main blues singers in and around Drew had become prolific recording artists, the local community of practitioners continued to influence and to be influenced by one another in ways which are usually associated with an almost wholly oral culture: live performance, imitation and adaptation, networks of kin and friendship, and word of mouth. Evans has interviewed many blues singers who are still alive and singing and provides us with an extraordinarily detailed and dynamic "life-history" of a single and much admired song, Tommy Johnson's "Big Road Blues". He has tracked down and compared many permutations of this song in terms of title, melody and lyric, sung by everyone from the relatively well-known to the very obscure, on recordings, in shacks in down-town Drew and in the open-air. He is able to show that individual folk blues are indeed usually built up from a cultural stock consisting of a brief stanzaic "core", which coalesces with variable fragments of melody, and a repertoire of free-floating and moving verbal imagery. There are many examples of such language in *Big Road Blues* but a brief extract from Roosevelt Holts's "Sundown Blues", which is itself based on a song of Tommy Johnson's of the same name, indicates its style and power.

> Well, don't the sun look lonesome
> shining down through the trees?
> Well, the sun look lonesome shining
> down through the trees.
> Don't your baby look lonesome
> packing up her trunk to leave?

Evans insists that, whereas the *classic blues of Bessie Smith and the other great, mostly female, performers* of the 1920s, depended for their impact upon the unfolding of a powerful narrative, the rural folk genre remained more fragmentary, allusive and oblique: non-folk blues were grandly gestural and usually performed by "stars", but the folk variant was still rooted in understatement and intense audience participation. (Evans's commitment to folklore and to a loose form of structuralism sometimes leads him to underestimate the extent to which recent research in anthropology and the social history of literacy has begun to clarify differences in popular consciousness between oral and more "modern" societies.)

One might be tempted to conclude that, considered as individuals, performers of the blues in the Drew area were, and still are, lacking in artistic originality. But this would be to misstate a central, if problematic, aspect of Big Road Blues. We now know from the recorded evidence, as well as from the writings of Paul Oliver, David Evans himself, and others, that Tommy Johnson and the equally influential Charley Patton (1887–1934) were major figures and "creative artists" in their self-gathered *Big Road Blues* tradition, that there are a number of other performers of talent.

And yet there is undoubtedly a residual tension between Evans's evaluation of the Mississippi folk blues as music, and his deeper theoretical preoccupations. He argues forcibly that we should interpret a blues piece primarily in terms of performance, "generated by" the singer but shaped at a much deeper and culturally more significant level by a relatively small stock of standard blues together with a much larger repertoire of musical and lyrical fragments. The socio-historical and ethnomusicological evidence presented in *Big Road Blues* strongly supports this explanation. Nevertheless, parts of the general argument will be new to those who listen to the blues mainly for pleasure and who have become accustomed to an altogether more anecdotal and less intellectual approach. There are signs that Evans himself has not fully reconciled his role as distinguished musical critic with that of pioneer investigator of an objective, non-artistic folk tradition.

West 23rd

Where the cab smashed it, NYK TWNKL DNOT is my marker –
West 23rd, and a block to Joey's apartment, the manholes
spurting their usual sprays of steam. I stride them down,
blind in each cloud, then myself, then blind again.

And first thing back I phone you, the quite tranquillizing
[illegible] bobbering, bobbering bouncing into the receiver [illegible]
your bedside, whatever I catch you. *Only a fortnight now* –
your speech is slow, as if filtered through water – *Come soon.* . . .

Joey thinks he is passing the time for me, asking me *Nightcap?*
wiping the kitchen table clean with his inside cuff
and trickling two steady tracks of cocaine. *Me first!*
Or *did I go first last night?* If he speaks at all after this

what he says is the same: *I never fought; but I tell you,*
it fucked me up. I hid three years. I even tried
faking my death, and it must have worked. Those others,
who went, they're fucked up too, but more. Now I'm free

and I never killed anyone. Ask around. Not a single one.
I make my excuses early, and lie on my unmade bed
telling myself I might see you, or hear your voice
in the rain of luminous atoms streaking the air.

But you never appear. When the storms subside at last
it is only for traffic – the hiss of its surf all night,
and Joey padding the corridor barefoot just before sleep,
some almost-forgotten instinct reminding him, bolt the door.

Andrew Motion